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Last chance in Italian Nazi trial
World News, Page 5

Tiger earns his stripes
World of Sport



Pessah fun for all the family
Arts & Entertainment, Page 7

Index
Arts & Entertainment7
Business8
Crossword11
Movies/TV11
Opinion6
Sports10

Ross to return to region

By News agencies

WASHINGTON - US envoy Dennis Ross will visit the Middle East this week for talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders on reviving the stalled peace process. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright announced yesterday. She said Ross would consult with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat on how to stem violence and what steps they are prepared to take to stop the deterioration and lay the basis for making the peace process work again. On the basis of Ross's talks, President Bill Clinton will be able to decide "what the US can and will do to re-establish the credibility of the process," Albright said. "There has been a serious deterioration in the level of trust and confidence and in the ability of the parties to pursue peace," she said. Ross's trip emerged after Albright held a telephone talk over the weekend with Arafat. In Jerusalem, US Ambassador Martin Indyk briefed Netanyahu on Sunday night. The aim is to get Israel and the Palestinians to drop their conditions and resume negotiations. Albright said she did not know whether the two sides are prepared to take that step. Based on Ross's assessment, she said, a decision will be made on what to do next.



A grim reminder

Bereaved parents yesterday walk past a CH-53 transport helicopter, of the type in which their son and 72 other servicemen died on February 4 when two collided en route to Lebanon. The IDF hosted the parents at Mahanayim airfield before they attended a memorial assembly at Kibbutz Kfar Blum, where Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai lauded the devotion of their sons to the protection of the country. See story, Page 12.

Levy, Arafat in Malta today

By MICHAL YUDELMAN and JON BEHARUEL

Foreign Minister David Levy yesterday decided to attend the Malta foreign ministers' conference today, after being assured the gathering will not adopt a resolution against Israel.

however, that Levy is expected to meet with Arafat, noting that European Union envoy to the Middle East Miguel Moratinos is trying to organize such a meeting. If the meeting takes place, it will be the first between PA and Israeli leaders since the breakdown of talks over Har Homa. Levy said that if he meets Arafat, he will insist on the PA's keeping its commitment to fight terrorism and stop incitement against Israel as a condition for resuming the peace talks.

Barcelona process, and that no elements relating to the peace process or Israel and the Palestinians are introduced," Levy said.

In the last two days, Levy received two messages from Moratinos in the name of Holland's Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo, who is the chairman of the conference, assuring him it would not deviate from its agenda and would not be turned into a confrontation on the peace process.

The Europeans would like to keep the Middle East crisis in the background and concentrate on long-term economic and security ties between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, diplomats told Reuters.

"We're worried the Middle East peace problems might hijack the agenda and overshadow all the good work the Europeans have been doing," one diplomat said. Levy is to address the opening session today, take part in the expert workshops, and hold a series of meetings with foreign ministers of the participating countries.

The conference is to be attended by 15 European foreign ministers. Continued on Page 12

Levy dismisses unity talk, Page 2

Levy said he did not know whether he would meet with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat, but that if the Palestinians ask for a meeting, he would consider it favorably. Palestinian sources said there are no plans for Arafat to meet Levy today, and Mahmoud Abbas, Arafat's deputy, will not be attending.

Abbas brought the current crisis in PA-Israeli relations to public notice almost a month ago, when he offered his resignation as head of the Palestinian final status talks team, following a fruitless meeting with Levy in Jerusalem over the issues of Har Homa and redeployment.

Foreign Ministry sources said,

Dollar breaks NIS 3.4 mark

By Jerusalem Post Staff

The dollar rose yesterday to a new high against the shekel, breaking the NIS 3.4 barrier, and settling at NIS 3.403, just over a quarter of a percentage point's appreciation over the previous trading day.

The shekel's depreciation coincides with the world's leading currencies' drop against a mighty greenback, which last broke the pre-'93 level of 126 yen, and last month surpassed DM 1.7 for the first time in three years.

Including yesterday's fluctuation, the dollar has appreciated 4.7% against the shekel so far this year. However, other major currencies have been depreciating against the shekel, most notably the mark, whose current shekel value is nearly 6% lower than it was last fall.

The Bank of Israel did not intervene in trading over the past few days, since its so-called diagonal mechanism has distanced itself slightly from the bottom band, which signals to the central bank when to buy or sell a foreign currency to keep it within its self-imposed boundaries for the shekel's exchange rate. See Page 8.

Businessman Nahum Manbar missing

By Jerusalem Post Staff

An Israeli businessman with alleged links to illegal trading with Iran has been missing in Europe since a basketball game in Greece last month. There has been no contact with missing Nahum Manbar for the past three weeks.

Channel 1's *Mabat* reported last night that, according to reports in the American press, Manbar had allegedly been connected with breaking the arms embargo on Iran and had also sold chemical weapons components to China. These components, it was alleged, had made their way to Iran.

According to the reports, Manbar had vehemently denied these accusations. Manbar, a major sponsor of Hapoel Jerusalem basketball club, was last seen at a game in Greece when the Jerusalemites were thrashed by Iraklis Salonika. He did not turn up, as expected, for the State Cup final in which Hapoel beat Maccabi Tel Aviv, and he also did not call to congratulate the team on its sensational victory.

"We have no idea where he is, we haven't heard anything from him," basketball player Adi Gordon told Channel 1.

"I feel that something strange has happened and we don't know what could be behind the story here," Hapoel Jerusalem basketball club manager Danny Klein said.

According to Channel 1, Manbar was accused by the US State Department in July 1994 of breaking the trade embargo with Iran by selling the Islamic state equipment used for manufacturing chemical weapons.

The report said Manbar was then banned from entering the US. The TV report said Manbar had denied selling anything to Iran that would endanger Israel and said Israeli officials had been aware of his business activities. Manbar's family refused to be interviewed.

Insurance firms asking policy applicants about AIDS contacts

By URIEL HELLMAN

Many applicants for life insurance policies are forced to indicate whether or not they have had any contact with AIDS patients, according to attorney Dan Yakir of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI).

In a complaint he filed with Insurance Commissioner Boron Shorer, Yakir maintained that the practice is an infringement of the rights to privacy and free association. Shorer was not available for comment.

According to ACRI, several life insurance companies demand that applicants who refuse to answer the question: "Are you now or have you ever been in contact with

a person suffering from AIDS?" must undergo an AIDS test before being accepted for a policy.

Yakir said that "there is no legitimate interest for insurance companies to ask such a question, since mere contact with AIDS patients has no ill effects on one's health.

"An insurance company has no right to demand from someone details about the health of the people he knows," he said. Yakir added that such a policy "has a negative effect on AIDS patients," since it encourages their ostracism from society in general.

In one case, the Dolev insurance company refused to issue payment to the family of a deceased policy-holder, because it claimed that the man, who had indicated that he had had no contact with AIDS patients, came out as a homosexual after he became insured, and therefore must have lied on his application. A court case on the matter is pending.

Dolev could not be reached for comment.

Dori Spivak, a lawyer for the Society for the Protection of Personal Rights, an organization for gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, said that simply having contact with AIDS patients "does not

increase the possibility that the person has AIDS in any significant way." He called for the question to be disallowed in life insurance applications, and suggested that the insurance companies be forbidden from asking applicants about their exposure to HIV.

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Winning cards
First seminar on cloning held in Haifa
By JUDY SIEGEL
number of cows are put with clones taken from embryos. This achievement is a revolution of technology in Scotland to produce deep clone named Dolly. The cloning was carried out by scientists at the University of Edinburgh.
scientists on the cow cloning proves the technique used on more than 200 animals were all minimal, were all dead at the first-ever seminar on cloning, held at Haifa's Rabin Center.

NEWS

in brief

Egypt embarking on new plan to save peace

Egypt said yesterday it will launch a widespread diplomatic campaign to lobby Washington and the European Union for initiatives it hopes will salvage the faltering peace process. President Hosni Mubarak is dispatching his top political aide to the United States today.

World group slams Jerusalem construction

A global parliamentary group yesterday denounced Israel over its plans to build in eastern Jerusalem.

UN Mideast session delayed to next week

An emergency special session of the General Assembly on Israeli building in eastern Jerusalem which had been expected to get under way yesterday, will probably be delayed a week, diplomats said.

MKs demand more security in Hebron

A group of 15 MKs has signed a petition demanding that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai plan IDF forces all around the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron to prevent rioters from reaching it.

Four-year-old killed by car

Raja Hassan, four-years-old, from Kafr Nahf just outside Karmiel, was killed yesterday afternoon when he was hit by a car. Police reported that the child ran from the terraces in the village straight into the road at the same moment that a car was passing.

Iran long-range missile slated for 2000

By STEVE RODAN

Israel plans to raise Russian aid to Iran's medium-range ballistic missile project during this week's visit by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posvalinik.

The officials said that despite numerous Israeli appeals, Russia is continuing to provide massive aid to Iran's missile project. They said Teheran is developing a missile, with a range of up to 1,500 kilometers, that can hit any part of Israel.

Just two weeks ago, the Iranians held tests, albeit ground tests so far, with the Russians to develop a missile with a range of 1,500 km. that can have Iran reach Israel through the use of ballistic missiles.

The officials added that the missile will be able to carry a non-conventional, including nuclear, warhead and that Teheran plans to test launch it within three years.

"We view this project gravely," a senior official said. "It's a serious Iranian effort and, with Russia behind it, this project can be completed on schedule."

The officials said Russia was invited to help Iran with its ballistic missile, after North Korea was apparently unable to supply its Nodong I missile. The Nodong, with a range of 1,300 km., is believed to have been fired once and never reached the stage of deployment.

"Iran tried to get Nodong I, but it never arrived," Efraim Kam, deputy director of Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies said. "Maybe it was because of financial difficulties in North Korea. Maybe there were political difficulties with the Americans. This leaves Russia now as the

No. 1 supplier to Iran."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Moscow in early March and met with Russian President Boris Yeltsin. They agreed to clarify the extent and type of help Russia is providing Iran.

But Israeli and Russian diplomatic sources agree that Netanyahu was not successful in changing minds in Moscow. They said both the Foreign Ministry and the Russian military lobby are united on selling weapons and nuclear technology to Iran.

"Russia is a serious strategic problem for Israel," an official said. "Despite all the warm meetings reported, I doubt there is love between us and Russia."

Diplomatic sources say Israel is closely following reports that Iran and Russia have concluded a deal in which Teheran would buy Russian weapons for Syria - the first stop on Posvalinik's tour. The deal is meant to solve Syria's inability to pay its \$11 bil-

lion debt to Moscow. "Our assessment is that the only thing that is stopping continued Russian arms shipments to Syria is the debt," an official said.

"But if Iran provides the cash for new weapons, then Russia will sell to Syria." US and Israeli officials are said to agree on the extent of Russian aid for Iran's ballistic missile project. The two countries discussed Israeli intelligence on the Iranian ballistic missile project during a visit by senior Israeli defense and intelligence officials in January.

Reuter adds: Iran said yesterday it would soon start mass-producing a fighter aircraft which it said had been locally designed and built. A deputy State-run Teheran Radio quoted a deputy head of Iran's Armed Forces Joint Chiefs of Staff as saying the aircraft was the result of efforts by Iranian air force experts and had been successfully tested.

Levy dismisses national unity talk

By SARAH HONIG

Foreign Minister David Levy argued yesterday that "no national unity coalition is possible unless Labor reveals once and for all the magic formula it claims to possess for the final status settlement."

Levy told members of his Geshet faction that he was speaking after hearing such sentiments from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

What is needed "first of all in order to further any national unity cause," Levy said, "is for those elements in the opposition who claim to be interested in entering the coalition to indicate clearly on what basis they want to do so."

Yet Levy indicated that chances for national unity are slim when "those who wish to enter proclaim that they want to do so because they utterly reject the government's line. They keep asserting that this is a bad government. All this seems incongruent with unity aspirations but seems to betray the basic attitude of not coming to terms with the results of the last elections."

To his mind, Levy finally quipped, "all this national unity talk is a game of make believe."

National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon also judged that possible formation of a national unity coalition hinges on a final settlement blue-print - but in his view it is the Netanyahu government which must produce one.

As Sharon sees it, "the precondition to expanding the coalition is the disclosure by the present government of the detailed final status map, as it envisions it, as well as its goals for relations with the Palestinians and the Arab states."

According to Sharon, there is "no need for a broader coalition if its goal would be to provide backing for the erosion of vital security zones for Israel's continued existence. We don't need to establish a national unity coalition in order to halt any Zionist action in this land," Sharon maintained.

Sharon is one of the original national unity supporters in the Likud, on the grounds that "no crucial decisions should be arrived

at by a single person." In Labor, meanwhile, the squabbles about national unity heated up, with the pro and con sides planning to hold gatherings, despite appeals from party Secretary-General Nissim Zivili that they not handle this political hot potato in public.

Levy's internal debate is expected to intensify tomorrow, when party chairman Shimon Peres returns from his South American vacation. Though he cancelled a gathering of 150 supporters scheduled for Thursday, following Zivili's appeal, the feeling in some Labor quarters is that the meeting may after all take place, but under a different guise and with Zivili's own participation.

The faction supporting leadership candidate Ehud Barak charged yesterday that Peres will turn the pro-Pessah toast he has planned at party headquarters into a pro-national unity meeting. They say Peres will seize the opportunity to deliver a pro-unity pep talk with Zivili himself attending.

Zivili's call on all sides to drop their plans for opposing gatherings is a sham, say Barak loyalists. It was motivated only by the desire to pressure Barak to cancel his own plans. Barak, they maintain, has no intention to do so and will press ahead with the Tel Aviv rally he plans for tomorrow.

Peres and Barak are on opposing sides of the Labor national unity divide. The Barak camp charges that more than Peres is interested in national unity, he wants Labor to enter the government before the June 3 primary at which he will be replaced as Labor chairman, most likely by Barak. If he manages to enter the cabinet before that date as the senior Labor minister, he will retain a claim to Labor primacy despite the election of another chairman.

Labor members, meanwhile, cast ballots yesterday for 3,500 convention delegates. The convention will meet in mid-May and will deliberate many vital procedural and ideological issues, including controversial platform amendments.

Barak convenes anti-unity group

By LIAT COLLINS

Labor Party leadership candidate MK Ehud Barak yesterday convened a group of 15 Labor MKs who announced their objections to a national unity government.

Two other leadership candidates - Yossi Beilin and Shlomo Ben-Ami - were among the group. Beilin suggested that all those who might be considered for a ministerial position in a national unity government should announce they will not join one.

"It is the only thing which can help. You can't import ministers," Beilin said.

Barak said he would consider the proposal.

Barak pointedly avoided bad-mouthing party leader Shimon Peres, who favors a national unity government. "He is both the party head and a great man by all counts, not just at the party or movement level," he said.

Barak said care should be taken to preserve Peres's name and dignity: "It will help us get back into power."

Eli Goldschmidt said it would be "immoral" to join a national unity government led by Benjamin Netanyahu who, he said, had stood at the head of the campaign of

incitement which led to Yitzhak Rabin's assassination.

Goldschmidt, Haggai Merom, Yael Dayan, and Ophir Pines said they would not support a unity government even if the Labor Party establishment were to decide to join one.

Dayan, however, did not rule out the possibility that Peres and a team of his choice would work with Netanyahu to help the peace process.

Eli Ben-Menachem said he opposes a national unity government because "we're always the suckers who have to keep [Benjamin Netanyahu] in power."



Good fences make good neighbors?

Jewish residents of Hebron clash with soldiers yesterday, after troops began building a four-meter-high chicken-wire fence to prevent stonethrowing between Beit Hadassah residents and their Arab neighbors. "We will not live in ghettos," shouted one of some 50 Jews who hurled eggs and flower pots, and also turned water hoses on the security forces. Police arrested one man who had a knife in his hand.

(Reuters)

Closure eased

As of this morning, Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, married and aged over 30, will be permitted to enter Israel for work, Minister of Defense Yitzhak Mordechai and Chief-of-Staff Lt.-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak decided last night, the IDF Spokesman announced.

In addition, visits to security prisoners will be renewed, but limited to 300 per day.

Jerusalem Post Staff

'Peace Pulse' index shows Mideast had bad first quarter

By MARILYN HENRY and HILLEL KUTTLER

Virtually all progress made since the 1993 Rabin-Arafat handshake on the White House lawn was erased during the first quarter of 1997, according to a new index of "leading Middle East indicators" prepared for a pro-Oslo Accord organization.

"Peace Pulse" - an index intended to gauge the peace process based on economic, diplomatic, and other trends - was released yesterday at a Capitol Hill news conference. The index is a joint project of the Israel Policy Forum and the Center for International Relations of the University of California at Los Angeles.

The index combines 14 qualitative and quantitative indicators to rate the overall peace process at given historical moments on a scale of 0-100, where 0 is "total war" and 100 is "total peace." Each indicator declined since January, showing that the prospects for peace are worse than they have been since the Gulf War, IPF-UCLA said in a statement.

According to the index, 1996 was a year of "precipitous decline" that followed five years of steady progress. There was some progress in 1997, due to the Hebron accord and the Palestinian redeployment, according to the index. But, at the end of the first quarter of 1997, the Peace Pulse score was 39.05, the lowest level since 1992. The score for 1992 was 38.75. In contrast, in October 1995, just before the assassination of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, the score was 69.4.

The dominant measures in the index are the Israeli economy and public opinion, said Steven Spiegel, who developed the index. Spiegel, a professor of

political science at UCLA, worked in conjunction with the Israel Policy Forum, an organization formed shortly after the 1993 Israel-PLO White House meeting to support the peace process.

The Israeli economy is measured by tourism, Israeli exports, Israeli companies on Wall Street, and foreign investment. The Palestinian economy is measured by unemployment and growth in gross domestic product (GDP).

Spiegel said the project weighed which business indicators to use, acknowledging there is a lag time for some indicators, while tourism, on the other hand, is very closely related to the peace process.

However, David Rubin, who heads Israel's economic mission to the US, expressed doubt about the use of quantitative measures. Israeli exports, for example, are affected by actions that have nothing to do with the peace process, he said.

"Undoubtedly, the most important parameter effecting Israeli exports today is the value of the Israeli shekel, which is being affected by the interest rate," Rubin said in New York. "If the interest rate goes down and the shekel is devalued and exports increase, does this mean that the peace process is back on its feet?"

Rubin also questioned the relationship of tourism to the peace process. Unlike previous instances where tourism has recovered after terror incidents, Rubin said, tourism has remained low, even though there were no incidents for a year. "Everyone is assuming that tourism is down because of the situation," he said, but "one my theories is that Israel is an expensive place."

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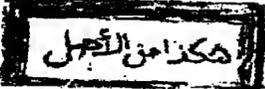
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up to her last days.
May her memory be blessed. May the myriad inspired teachers and
students worldwide be a living testament to her life's mission and
achievement. May her dedication to Torah and Masoret, her loyalty to
truth and her love and trust of her students' ability and potential, serve as
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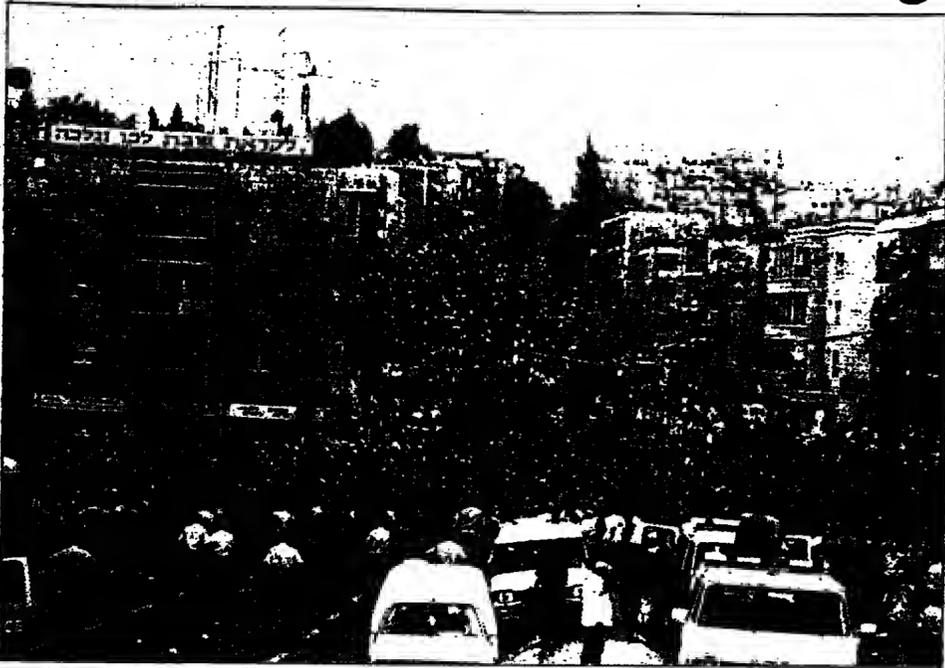
In Jerusalem, the haredim are winning

As soon as the High Court handed down its decision on Sunday, haredi politicians verbally took off after the justices, and some haredi protesters physically took to the streets.

And that was just the beginning. Everyone is expecting a massive demonstration on Rehov Bar-Ilan on Shabbat and — as Eda Haredit activist Yehuda Meshi-Zahav said — “a hot summer.”

But the haredi reaction, said Bar-Ilan University geography professor Yosef Shilhav, an authority on haredi-secular relations, stems from a basic misunderstanding of what the court said.

True, the court did overturn Transport Minister Yitzhak Levy's decision to close the street to traffic during prayer times on Shabbat and holidays, thereby opening the road on these days. But, in the same breath, the court said the road could be closed during prayers if a solution is found for the secular residents — estimated at 10 percent — living along the street.



Haredim demonstrate on Rehov Bar-Ilan in this archive photo taken last summer.

There is no doubt, said Shilhav, who has written extensively on haredi-secular relations in Jerusalem and who is completing a book on haredi city management for the Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies, that Levy will find such a solution. “The street will eventually be closed on Shabbat,” he predicted.

Shilhav's scenario: Levy will come back with a plan to close the street during prayer, and an argument will arise over the hours of prayer, since a minyan can be found in the neighborhood around Bar-Ilan on Shabbat pretty much from dawn to dusk.

“People will stop driving on the street, because when they drive, they don't sit and wonder what time it is, they want to get where they are going. They will get used to an alternate route, and use that route instead,” he said.

“Those who drive on the road on Shabbat, out of principle, will eventually tire — or leave the city — while the haredim, who are fighting for the rules on their own turf, will show staying power and prevail.”

over their own territory, the fights to have control over their own proverbial “four cubits” of space.

One of the capital's paradoxes is that even as it has taken on a more secular feel over the last 15 years — more non-kosher restaurants, more entertainment open on Shabbat — the secular population is feeling more and more under siege.

Prof. Shlomo Hasson, also of the Floersheimer Institute and author of two books on haredi-secular relations in Jerusalem, said these sentiments are not unwarranted.

“The concern of the secular public is that the haredim are now in the positions of power,” he said. “It is impossible to

ignore the municipal elections of 1993, and the national elections of 1996. The [secular] public has not yet felt the results of these changes, but is worried that it will.”

The religious and haredi parties won 12 of the 31 seats on Jerusalem's City Council in 1993, and control the city's key portfolios, first and foremost the building and planning committee. The religious parties also have 23 seats in the Knesset.

Rehov Bar-Ilan was closed soon after the elections — showing a link between the political power of the religious parties and the situation on the ground.

Former Jerusalem deputy mayor Miron Benvenisti wrote in *Yediot Aharonot* yesterday that

after Bar-Ilan, Ramat Eshkol will be the next neighborhood to “be abandoned” to the haredim. Amiram Gonen, another geographer with the Floersheimer Institute, said this is almost a given, since it is so close to the capital's haredi center.

What is more significant, he said, is the likelihood that — because of haredi power in city hall — the yet unbuilt neighborhoods of Har Homa and Givat Hamoros will also become haredi.

History has shown that in general, the haredim win battles when they are fighting to control their own territory, and lose when they try to dictate norms of behavior outside their own neighborhoods. In Jerusalem, the haredi territory is growing.

anyone who reads the words of the Prophet Mohammed can see that there can be no Moslem religious objection to the existence of the State of Israel, Mufti of Istanbul Selhatin Kaya, told *The Jerusalem Post* yesterday.

Kaya, who is visiting as the head of an official Turkish Moslem religious delegation, said that Mohammed signed a treaty with the Jews during his journey from Mecca to Medina. The treaty, he said, included 56 clauses and showed that Islam cannot be against Judaism.

Moslems seek peace and pray for peace, he said, adding that he hopes a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian problem is found soon.

Eli Avidar, head of the Foreign Ministry's inter-religious department for dialogue with Islam, said that this was the first official Moslem religious delegation from

Levy takes on Bar-Ilan problem

By HAIM SHAPIRO

Transport Minister Yitzhak Levy last night began yet another effort to find a solution for Jerusalem's Rehov Bar-Ilan in a meeting with ministry, police, and municipal officials.

The meeting followed a High Court of Justice ruling on Sunday which gave Levy authority to close the street during synagogue services on Shabbat, but which also ordered him to find a suitable solution for the secular residents in the area.

Yesterday, Jerusalem City Councilman Ornan Yekutieli (Meretz), a leader in the fight to prevent the closure of the street, sent a letter to Levy warning that the court had set three conditions for its closure: that alternative routes had to be open on Shabbat, that traffic should flow freely dur-

ing hours when it was allowed on Shabbat and not stopped by violence, and finally that the street be open during all hours for security and emergency vehicles.

Following the haredi demonstrations in the street on Sunday night, Yekutieli said, any immediate closure would be a surrender to violence. He called for Levy to leave the street open during a cooling-off period, before taking any action.

MK Ophir Pines (Labor), who was among the petitioners to the court to keep the street open, yesterday suggested to Levy that the street be closed during synagogue services, but only once during the entire Shabbat, and not three times as Levy had suggested earlier. Closing the street three times would create confusion, keeping the secular residents from using the street altogether, he said.

Mufti of Istanbul: No religious objection to Israel

By HAIM SHAPIRO

Anyone who reads the words of the Prophet Mohammed can see that there can be no Moslem religious objection to the existence of the State of Israel, Mufti of Istanbul Selhatin Kaya, told *The Jerusalem Post* yesterday.

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Eli Avidar, head of the Foreign Ministry's inter-religious department for dialogue with Islam, said that this was the first official Moslem religious delegation from

Turkey. It was sent, he said, by the Turkish Religious Affairs Ministry.

The fact that the delegation came is especially important in view of the strong diplomatic and military links between the two countries, and fears that growing Moslem extremist elements could influence Turkey to abandon these ties. These fears had intensified when Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, the leader of the Islamic Rafah Party, came to power last year.

Yesterday Kaya, together with the two other members of the delegation, Prof. Serafeim Goleuk and Prof. Saban Kuzgum, both of the theology faculty of the Islamic University of Istanbul, met with Dr. Ron Kromish, director of the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel (ICCI), and Rabbis David Rosen and Isaac Newman, under the auspices of the ICCI.

Shiffer: PM has credibility problem

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN

The media has a “very difficult problem of credibility” with the Prime Minister's Office's denials of their reports, *Yediot Aharonot* diplomatic reporter Shimon Shiffer said yesterday.

Shiffer, who was interviewed on Israel Radio and Army Radio, was referring to the denials, issued by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's spokesman Shai Bazak, of his story on the front page of yesterday's *Yediot*, which revealed the content of a secret cable sent by Ambassador to Italy Yehuda Mlo about Netanyahu's talks in Rome.

He was also referring to the conflicting reports from Washington, after Netanyahu's meeting with US President Bill Clinton. Netanyahu had called the meeting “good” and “friendly,” Shiffer said, while Washington officials expressed anger and disappointment.

Foreign Ministry sources yesterday confirmed that the American administration was angry and disappointed with the Clinton-Netanyahu meetings, according to cables from the embassy in Washington.

Bazak, who debated Shiffer on Israel Radio, retorted that “if the journalists didn't lie so much and didn't broadcast so many half-truths and inaccuracies, I would-

n't have to deny so much or clarify all the time.”

He said Netanyahu had made it clear to Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi that building on Har Homa would continue. He added that Netanyahu said that if the Palestinians continue to condition the resumption of talks on halting the construction of Har Homa, “then we will all stay on top of a high tree.”

“We have a very difficult credibility problem, which comes up time after time with the things we expose [in our reports] and then the reactions of the Prime Minister's Office,” Shiffer said.

According to Shiffer's story, under the headline: “PM: We all climbed on a high tree in the Har Homa affair,” Netanyahu told Prodi that the Har Homa work is “only infrastructure” and the construction of houses will only begin in three years, giving enough time for final status talks, including a Camp David summit.

Shiffer pointed out that the Prime Minister's Office denies many reports “which are not pleasant from its point of view, and they later turn out to be very true.”

He said he himself experienced a similar event three weeks ago, when he published a story saying Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat had rejected a “package of gestures” which

Netanyahu offered him.

“The next morning, both cabinet secretary Danny Naveh and Bazak rejected the report completely. Five days later, we released the full text of Netanyahu's letter to [US President Bill] Clinton, and there it said: ‘At the beginning of the week I proposed, as you know from [US Ambassador] Martin [Indyk], a package of gestures to Arafat, and he turned them down.’ “So should I believe Netanyahu's letter to Clinton, or his spokesman, who denies it,” Shiffer said.

Shiffer said the media has “a very basic problem. The prime minister enters [the press room] in Washington and says, ‘I've just finished a two-hour talk [with Clinton], a very friendly conversation, very effective. We see eye to eye on terrorism. A very good, effective talk.’ “Then we stay with the White House staff and talk, and hear something completely different. We hear serious complaints that Netanyahu was not prepared to show understanding of the president's positions, that the meeting, from the president's point of view, was a failure. Again we have to decide, whom do we believe.”

Shiffer said that during Netanyahu's term, the media has undergone a most difficult period. “Very often it is very difficult to

get to the truth and expose things.”

Commenting on Bazak's charge that he had based his story on unknown sources, whose political leanings are unclear, Shiffer said US special peace envoy Dennis Ross, his deputy Aaron Miller, and Indyk could hardly be called unknown or unreliable.

“The public can rely on us not to have written the story without at least talking to these people, who are responsible for the peace process in the American administration,” he said.

Bazak said he regretted Shiffer's statements, and that the journalists should check their sources again. “It's interesting that Israeli journalists meet the prime minister in the US, he explains to them what went on inside, and they prefer to rely on unknown sources, whose political leanings and considerations are unknown to me.”

“Since only two people, sometimes four, attended these meetings, and none of them said anything contrary to Netanyahu, the journalists should believe Israel's prime minister and at least give him a certain amount of credit, rather than immediately make up things which are not true.” Bazak noted that *Yediot* and other newspapers have often published “very incorrect” reports for which they had to apologize.

It's not too late to stop Trans-Israel Highway, SPNI says

By LIAT COLLINS

Under the title, “It's not too late to stop the Trans-Israel Highway,” the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel held a press conference in Tel Aviv yesterday where an international expert showed how other countries had blocked such projects.

Prof. John Whiteleg, from England's Liverpool University and the director of the Eco Logica company, presented examples of similar projects around the world, which were halted due to the tremendous damage done by developing such roads instead of public transport systems.

At the end of the meeting, the SPNI called on Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to stop the Trans-Israel Highway (Road No. 6) project. Whiteleg has acted as a consultant on sustainable development in transport to the governments of Austria, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, and the European Community, as well as to various international and foreign groups. He had seen many bad plans for

building redundant highways, but the Trans-Israel Highway is among the worst. He said there is no reason for a developed country like Israel, at the end of the second millennium, to approve such a plan and said it would not only fail to solve transport problems, but would make poor use of the limited natural resources and transport development budget.

He said Israel should learn from other countries — both the mistakes made in places like England and Germany, and the successes like Japan. He said Israel has the potential to be like Japan when it comes to efficient transport, because of its similar small size, densely populated cities, and advanced technology.

Whiteleg joined the call for the Trans-Israel Highway to be stopped, saying this had happened in many countries “and never resulted in disaster in my experience.” He said in the 1970s and 1980s, highways had been considered the wonder solution for transport problems, but by the beginning of the 1990s it was decided they often exacerbated problems instead. Whiteleg said the trend now in

Western countries is to put more funds into public transport.

He said one of the most important examples showing it is not too late to stop projects, even when they are already being carried out on the ground, is the 75 km road planned between Boshum and Dortmund in Germany. The road was stopped in 1993 after residents and environmental groups showed it would cause air pollution, bring traffic congestion into the towns, create noise and harm green areas.

Another example is England's M65, which would have cut into the Pennines, an area famed for its natural beauty and a popular hiking ground. He also said studies in England showed that the claim that a toll-road reduces public spending on highways is also mistaken.

Meanwhile, a dedication ceremony is to be held this morning for the Ben-Shemen interchange of the Trans-Israel Highway, in the presence of Finance Minister Dan Meridor and National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon.

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NEWS

in brief

Israeli pupils take first in Dubai competition

Political matters may make Israel unpopular in Dubai, but that did not stop judges there from awarding two Haifa youngsters first prize in a local drawing contest. According to an Education Ministry newsletter, the contest was sponsored by a local prince, with 10 young artists winning prizes, including Safaj Adlabi and Alai Halabi of Haifa's Het School. The two also won \$200 each. Education Minister Zevulun Hammer sent the two a message, saying their work "crossed borders and barriers between peoples, and expressed their yearning for peace." *Aryeh Dean Cohen*

Pupils meet with inmates in drug rehab

High school pupils are meeting prisoners in Hasharon Prison who are undergoing treatment to help them kick their drug habits, as part of a new Education Ministry program to fight drug abuse. Each two-hour meeting includes a play presented by the inmates, their personal stories, and an open discussion between the pupils and the inmates. The motto of the program is a statement made by one of the prisoners: "We lost our freedom; don't lose yours." *Aryeh Dean Cohen*

Glasses, lollipop lead police to criminal

Hanania Levy, 46, of Tel Aviv, was charged with attempted murder and rape in Tel Aviv District Court yesterday. According to the indictment, in mid-March Levy broke into a woman's apartment and hit her with a chunk of cement, gashing her scalp and knocking her out. When she came to, he undressed her and attempted to rape her, but was unable to complete the act. He then beat her and fled, leaving behind his glasses and a lollipop with the symbol of a restaurant on it. The police checked opticians in Tel Aviv until it was determined where the glasses were made and identified their owner. The owner of the restaurant said the man ate there the night of the crime. *Judy Siegel*

Matza campaign targets immigrants from CIS

A campaign to get the immigrants from the former Soviet Union to eat more matza is being conducted by Matzot Rishon, one of the country's largest matza manufacturers. It is running a series of ads and public service announcements in the Russian language press, radio and television, featuring former prisoner of Zion Yosef Mendelevitich. A spokesman for the company said that market surveys last year showed that most of the immigrants from the CIS did not buy matza, apparently because of their unfamiliarity with Judaism. *Haim Shapiro*

What to do if child is choking

Magen David Adom yesterday warned parents to be careful to prevent children's choking on matza and fish bones during Pessah. Every year, a number of babies and young children are taken to hospital with such a problem. If there is a problem, call MDA at 101. Encourage the victim to cough; if this doesn't remove the object, hit the victim between the shoulder blades several times. Only if the object is visible and accessible, try to pull it out with a finger in a fishhook motion. Otherwise, the Heimlich maneuver (in which a fist is pushed below the rib cage) should be carried out, but one should learn the technique in advance. *Judy Siegel*

Gorbachev honored for Jewish immigration

NEW YORK (AP) - Former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev has been honored for freeing Soviet Jews and working to end antisemitism in the former Soviet Union.



Mikhail Gorbachev

(Isaac Harezi)

Gorbachev accepted the King David Award Sunday at a star-studded gala co-hosted by actor Michael Douglas, who spoke of his own family's emigration from Belarus.

Gorbachev, whom television newswoman Barbara Walters introduced as a "courageous visionary leader" and "one of the heroes of our time," was honored "for freeing Soviet Jewry." Both Gorbachev and his wife, Raisa, mingled with actor Peter Fonda, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, and others at the gala, sponsored by The Jerusalem Fund.

Standing beside the Gorbachevs

as a video screen showed photos of his ancestors and relatives from the former Soviet Union, Douglas told the story of his own family, which left what is now known as Belarus in 1908. Speaking before the ceremony, Gorbachev spoke warmly of Israel and its large Russian community.

"I first visited Israel after I'd stepped down as president," he said. "I was pleasantly surprised... that every step of the way there was someone that spoke Russian."

The Jerusalem Fund encourages education and a "renaissance of the Jewish people." Previous winners of the King David Award include film producer Steven Spielberg, former president Ronald Reagan, and former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher.

Gov't will compensate bilked immigrants

Netanyahu: Panel to investigate claims, arrange compensation

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu accepted a proposal by Absorption Minister Yuli Edelstein yesterday established a committee to evaluate the claims of hundreds of immigrants from the CIS who lost their life savings in money-transfer schemes just prior to their aliya. The committee will decide who is eligible to receive government compensation for some 75 percent of the funds they lost.

The immigrants, some from Russia and some from Ukraine, were bilked out of the money - in many cases totalling thousands of dollars - after they tried to have the funds transferred to Israel via companies recommended to them by aliya counselors. Many of the counselors operated in conjunction with the Liaison Bureau, under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office.

According to the recommendation, a three-member committee headed by a judge will be established and will determine who

has valid claims for compensation.

Such individuals would then receive 75 percent of the amount they turned over, in the form of a standing loan, based on the immigrants' remaining in the country. In exchange, the immigrants would drop their civil suits, and the government would have the option of suing the companies itself.

Edelstein's office, in making the announcement yesterday, pointed out that the move was being made even though the government's legal advisers had determined that it had a good defense in the case and that it was doubtful whether it could be held legally responsible. However, in light of the serious social and humane problem that arose in the case - with many of those involved in serious financial straits - it was necessary to try to find an out-of-court solution to the problem, with the government at least repaying a portion of the lost funds, an Absorption Ministry spokesman said.

Meanwhile, the government will continue

efforts to sue Jewish activist Leonid Roitman and Yosef Zisels, a chairman of the Va'ad umbrella association of Jewish organizations, and others allegedly involved in the scam and named in the respective suits to return the money.

An Absorption Ministry spokesman said the committee could begin its work very soon and that the amount of time it would take for the immigrants to get their money "will depend on what kind of evidence is required." However, he said the ministry would do what it could to ensure this period was kept to the minimum.

Victor Gopman, one of the victims of the scam, said yesterday that while "75 percent is better than nothing," the deal means that "those responsible have gotten away with the other 25%." He said the fairness of the deal depended on when and how the immigrants would receive the money, noting that many of them have become embittered and want to leave the country.

"It's one thing to get ripped off by your fellow Jew, and then for your country to not do very much about it for years," he said.

but another to get ripped off by your fellow Jew, and then for your country to not do very much about it for years," he said.

MK Naomi Blumenthal, head of the MK Naami Committee, praised the decision but said compensating the immigrants for only 75% of the money they lost was simply "the least of all evils."

Noting that most of the victims were elderly, she said: "In this case, there was criminal negligence on the part of official representatives of the State of Israel who continued to advise immigrants to deposit their money in straw companies."

Lawyer Yoram Sheffel, representing the Ukrainian group, hailed the decision, saying it was a "generous and fair" offer. He said it was a "doubtful there were many countries in the world that would 'demonstrate such a great sense of responsibility' in such a matter. Sheffel added that he would strongly recommend to his clients that they accept the proposal to bring about an end to the case.



Likud MK Meir Sheerit (left) and Labor MK Ehud Barak confer after yesterday's plenum session.

(Isaac Harezi)

Livnat: Opposition not playing fair

Barak: Government needs toppling

By LIAT COLLINS

Communications Minister Limor Livnat yesterday accused the Left of carrying out a campaign of delegitimization against Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and the government. Answering four urgent motions to the agenda at a special sitting of the Knesset, Livnat said this is why she does not think there is a realistic chance of creating a national unity government.

"If members of Labor and Meretz stand up and say they are prepared to accept the government's basic guidelines, I would support a national unity government," she said. "But I'm not sure that that is what they intend to say or what they are hinting at."

She said the Labor Party is splintered and the opposition is finding it difficult to accept that they lost the elections in a democratic process.

"I would expect legitimate criticism from the opposition - it's even necessary and desirable in a democratic regime - but on the other hand I would expect that at least the same amount of criticism or, half the amount, would be turned towards its partners in the Oslo Accords: the Palestinian Authority. I would expect the opposition to support the government in its fight against terror."

Livnat supported the idea of moving directly to negotiations on the permanent arrangements with the Palestinians, "before 90 percent of the territory is in their hands."

Labor Party leadership candidate MK Ehud Barak raised the first motion to the agenda and used the opportunity to blast the prime minister and his policies. He completely ruled out the possibility of a national unity government. "This is a government under

caution," he said, referring to the investigation into the Bar-On Affair.

"This is not a government worthy of us. Democracy needs an opposition. This government needs toppling, not saving," Barak said.

He accused Netanyahu of leading the country to war, saying: "All the dreams and hopes are shattering in the face of the Cheim-like acts of a government going to and fro between flower shows in Holland and the investigation rooms of [police Bar-On investigator] Sando Mazor."

Barak said unemployment is increasing, immigration dropping, tourism collapsing and the chances of peace disappearing. He repeated the standard opposition catchphrase inverting the Likud's electoral slogan: "There is no peace and no safety."

The session was poorly attended by MKs and Netanyahu was not present. Opposition leader Shimon Peres is abroad. MK Anat Maor, speaking on behalf of Meretz, gave a pre-

Pessah speech citing what she called the 10 plagues of Netanyahu's government: blood, political violence, the division of Jerusalem and renewal of the intifada, unemployment, recession, growing social gaps, darkness, encouraging religious coercion and violations of human rights, diplomatic isolation, and the Bar-On Affair.

Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Chairman Uzi Landau, who spoke on behalf of the Likud along with MK Ze'ev Boim, attacked Peres and Labor for the way they had carried out the Oslo process.

"I ask myself, 'Did no one consider where all this was leading us?'" Landau said, to which Barak interjected that he should ask Yossi Beilin, a rival candidate for the party leadership and Oslo architect.

Landau said Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat had not given up on terror: "And we must not give in to violence. He cannot be given a prize for violence."

Clalit workers refuse Pessah clean-up

By JUDY SIEGEL

Kupat Holim Clalit maintenance workers and administrative personnel shocked management yesterday by announcing that despite labor court restraining orders, they would not prepare Clalit's hospitals for Pessah. "Kucik will clean the hospitals for Pessah," declared the union's statement, referring to Yossi Kucik, the Treasury's wage chief.

The union claimed that Kucik had prevented a new collective agreement from being implemented before Pessah, "so he may as well come and clean up and prepare for the holiday." The workers accused him of "hostility," which caused the breakdown in the agreement reached between the union and Clalit Chairman Dan Michaeli.

According to the collective agreement, all workers would get salary grade increases and therefore higher wages. But, at the last minute, the Treasury disqualified all Clalit workers from being included, saying it was illegal. Clalit management said yesterday that the union last week committed itself to honor the restraining orders and enter negotiations. "Until this minute, we haven't received any notification of intentions to violate the orders," management said after being informed by journalists of the union's faxed statement. "We regard very seriously the harm done to Jewish tradition [observance of Pessah] and to the large number of health fund members."

The Tel Aviv regional labor court will hold another hearing on the dispute today.

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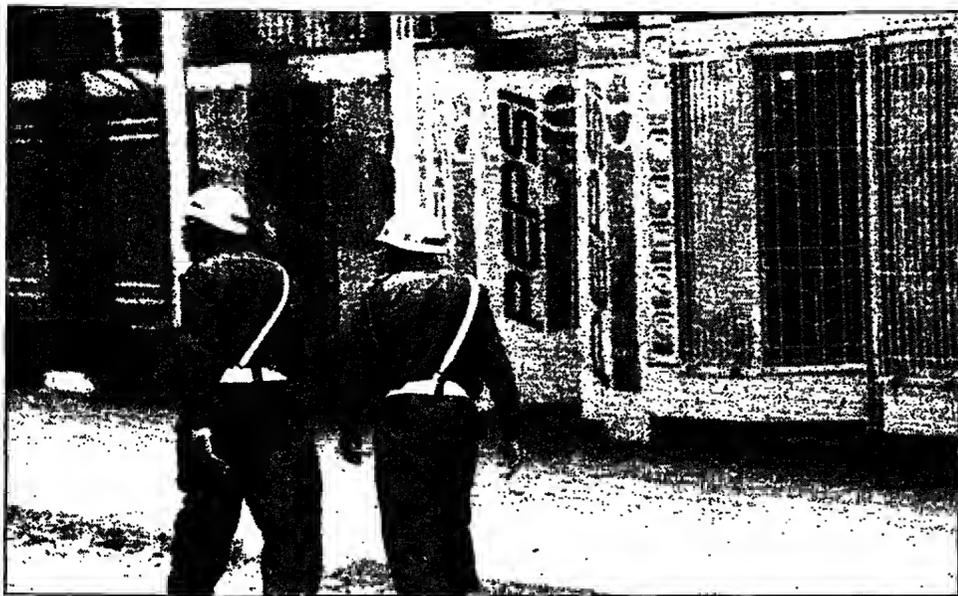
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Zairian policemen walk past closed shops in downtown Kinshasa yesterday. The opposition called for a 'dead city' in protest against President Mobutu Sese Seko's refusal to resign. (AP)

Zaire rebels name Shaba governor

By DIANNA CAHN

LUBUMBASHI (AP) — Moving quickly to fill what they called a political vacuum, Zairian rebels yesterday named one of their own as governor of the mineral-rich, southeastern Shaba region.

The rebels captured this city, Zaire's second largest and capital of the region, after a battle Friday at the airport with a special unit loyal to President Mobutu Sese Seko. The region contains this large African country's copper, cobalt and uranium deposits.

Mwenzé Kongolo, justice minister for the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, said Gaetan Kakudji had been appointed to the governor's post.

"There are political tensions in the city. We don't want to leave a vacuum of power," the rebel justice minister said.

Of Zaire's 11 regions, Shaba has been the most secessionist-minded since independence from Belgium in 1960 when — known at the time as Katanga — it tried to secede for three years.

In 1977 and 1978, Katangan exiles based in Angola invaded the region in support of another secessionist move but were driven out by French, Belgian and Moroccan troops.

In the latest seven-month insurgency, the rebels typically have captured cities before the triumphal entry of rebel leader Laurent Kabila, who either

appoints new local officials or calls for a voice vote from a crowd.

But Kabila has not yet traveled to Lubumbashi. Some supporters of Gabriel Kyungu wa Kumwanza, who had been governor until Sunday, were furious over his ouster and threatened to paralyze the city through demonstrations if elections were not held in 48 hours.

"They are replacing the Mobutu dictatorship with another dictatorship," said Boni Banza, a member of UFERI, the autonomy-seeking party founded in 1990 by one-time Zairian prime minister Nguzu Karl-I-Bond. "We want elections, not dictatorship."

Banza said Lubumbashi residents were hearing news of Kakudji's appointment on the radio yesterday and were already preparing to protest.

The rebels said Kakudji, a cousin of Kabila who lived in Belgium until October and whose last mission was to attend March 26 peace talks in Lomé, Togo, was a merely "provisional" governor.

The rebel alliance would "consider other measure later," said Kongolo, the rebel justice minister.

Kyungu, the incumbent governor, would not have won an election anyway, Kongolo claimed.

Rebel Economics Minister Mawampanga Mwana Nanga said complaints were coming from "a handful of disgruntled people ... these are the guys who drove Gecamines into the ground," he said, referring to the state holding company responsible for the mining in Shaba.

New trial begins for former Nazi Priebke

News agencies

ROME — Former Nazi SS captain Erich Priebke, accused of Italy's worst World War II atrocity in caves outside Rome, went on trial for the second time in a year yesterday but told the court he was not well and may not attend future hearings.

Priebke, 83, is accused of taking part in the 1944 execution of 335 civilians in retaliation for a bombing by the Italian resistance against occupying German forces.

"I showed up today to show respect to this tribunal," Priebke said, formally relinquishing his right to be present at the trial. "But I'm afraid in the future that won't be possible." Priebke added that he would be "available at any hour" the court required his presence.

Under Italian law, defendants are not obliged to attend trial sessions.

He was convicted of murder last August by a military court.

But it cleared him of premeditation and cruelty — the aggravating circumstances needed to override Italy's 30-year statute of limitation on murder.

The verdict created a sensation worldwide and prosecutors appealed, arguing the military court was biased. An appellate



Former Nazi SS captain Erich Priebke (Reuters)

orders to carry out the massacre.

"For me it was an action of war. I had to obey the order like all the others," Priebke told *Il Giornale* newspaper, adding that he had not thought any more about the killings once the war ended.

Priebke, who lived under his own name in Argentina until he was tracked down by Nazi hunters and extradited in 1996, is also under house arrest.

He was moved from his jail cell to a convent in Frascati, 20 km southeast of Rome, after his lawyers argued that his psychological state was deteriorating.

During the German occupation, Frascati was the headquarters for high-ranking German officers.

Shimon Samuels, of the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center, said yesterday that Priebke's second trial was a "last chance for Italy" to show that it was prepared to deal with the issue of war crimes.

Priebke's first trial was held in a small courtroom which held only a few spectators.

The new trial is taking place at the high-security Rebibbia prison on Rome's outskirts in a fortified courtroom called "the bunker."

The courtroom, which is ringed with cells, is normally used for high-profile, high-security cases like Mafia or terrorism trials.

Hass and Priebke have both said they would have been killed themselves if they hadn't followed

court ordered the new trial.

The military court yesterday agreed to a prosecution request to try Priebke and former Nazi Maj. Karl Hass, 84, together. Both are accused of participating in the massacre. The trial will resume Thursday.

Hass, 84, came to Italy from Switzerland last year at the prosecution's request to testify against Priebke in his first trial.

But Hass changed his mind, and jumped from his hotel balcony to avoid testifying. He was put under house arrest and then indicted last month.

Hass and Priebke have both said they would have been killed themselves if they hadn't followed

Blair could improve UK-US ties

LONDON (Reuters) — Anglo-US relations are bound to improve if opposition Labor leader Tony Blair wins next month's British election, dual Hollywood Oscar winner and potential Labor minister Glenda Jackson said yesterday.

"That relationship is clearly one that is more than merely cordial," she said of the links between Blair and US President Bill Clinton.

Ties were strengthened by a visit to Washington last April by Blair, the opinion poll favorite to win the May 1 election.

Unlike Ronald Reagan's warm admiration for then Conservative premier Margaret Thatcher, relations between Clinton and Prime Minister John Major are merely businesslike.

Labor aides gave steady help to Clinton's re-election campaign last year, in sharp contrast to Conservative backing of President George Bush in his failed 1992 re-election bid.

Jackson told reporters: "It is hardly surprising that relations between the US and the present British government are bad given that the Conservative Party sent over people to actively work against Clinton during the first election."

She said Blair and Clinton shared a similar approach to world problems. "There are many similarities in the kind of world they would both like to see begin to emerge."

Algerian terrorists kill 30

ALGIERS (AP) — Thirty civilians were slain by Moslem militants battling for factional dominance south of Algiers, bringing the death toll in the area to more than 170 in 10 days, the government said yesterday.

Witnesses said victims had their throats slit or heads cut-off near Boufarik overnight Sunday by members of the Zouabri faction of the Armed Islamic Group.

The government confirmed the

number of dead, breaking its customary silence on militant slayings for the second time in the past few days.

Officials seeking to reassure the public have been underplaying violence in the run-up to June legislative elections.

The Zouabri faction has been engaged in a three-month-old power struggle with the rival Abou Djamil faction of the Armed Islamic Group, with both battling for control of the

region 35 km south of Algiers.

Government forces had launched a counter-offensive against the militants in March, which caused a temporary lull in the number of deaths.

The government has scheduled legislative elections for June 5 — the first since it canceled a 1992 vote.

In a move to secularize its image, the Algerian Islamic party Hamas yesterday dropped the reference to Islam in its official name in order to participate in the June elections.

Albanians await 'invasion'

TIRANA (Reuters) — Albanians waited yesterday for the "D-Day" landing of nearly 1,200 Italian, French and Spanish troops as UN officials said the country's poor were desperately in need of food.

An eight-nation security force will begin deploying in earnest from today to protect the distribution of aid to the distressed Balkan state, which sank into anarchy after fraudulent savings schemes collapsed early this year.

The first major food aid shipment of more than 400 tons of wheat flour, beans and vegetable oil was expected in the main port of Durres at the same time the troops are due.

"D-day is tomorrow. It starts from after midnight," said Admiral Guido Venturoni, Italy's Defense Chief of Staff.

The operation is called "Dawn," symbolizing a new beginning after an armed insurrection swept Europe's poorest nation.

Nearly 300 have been killed in the mayhem.

Venturoni said in Rome that four navy vessels would dock today in the main Albanian port of Durres with 450 French, 350 Spanish and 200 Italian soldiers after crossing the Adriatic from the Italian port of Brindisi.

A further 150 Italian paratroopers would land at Tirana airport on board six Italian military aircraft.

Venturoni said the force, expected to number 6,000 when fully deployed, would have up to 2,500 men in Albania within the first 10 days of its mission.

Greece, Turkey, Austria, Denmark and Romania are also contributing soldiers to the UN-backed mission.

Greek army chief Lieutenant-General Manoussos Paragioudakis said in Athens a company of Greek soldiers was expected in the southern rebel-held city of Vlore on Thursday on a ship from Salonika.

Another company was expected to land in Tirana on Saturday, flying in from Salonika.

ISRAEL AIRPORTS AUTHORITY SPOKESMAN'S BUREAU

Please note than because of the Moslem holiday of **Id el-Adha** the Allenby border crossing will be **CLOSED** on Thursday, April 17, 1997.

Information updates - Ben Gurion Airport on Radio FM 91



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The Maltese opportunity

The expected meeting today in Malta between Foreign Minister David Levy and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat may not result in any breakthroughs, but the very fact of its occurrence could signal the end of the current peace-process stalemate. It is high time the parties started talking to each other directly, rather than through Washington or other intermediaries.

The European Union paved the way for the meeting by assuring Levy there would be no resolutions hostile to Israel at the conference, which is to include foreign ministers from 12 Mediterranean nations. Perhaps Europe is discovering that, if it is to have a more serious role in the peace process, it cannot simply take the Arab position on every issue. A much more productive stance is to provide neutral ground where the parties can talk, similar to the role Norway played in facilitating the Oslo Accords.

If Europe were to consistently become a more neutral player, it could have an advantage over the United States in Middle East peacemaking. While Washington will always have more influence over the parties, sometimes both sides prefer to avoid the prospect of US pressure. Rather than coactively trying to become more influential, the Europeans would probably do better to take advantage of their lack of influence by becoming a non-threatening honest broker.

Regarding this particular crisis, direct talks are just what the doctor ordered. After all, the proposal that is being cooked up in Washington, following the visits of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and a high-level Palestinian delegation, is only necessary if the parties will not talk to each other.

The tough issues ahead will only be resolvable through direct negotiations; the US is right to treat bridging proposals as a last resort, when all else fails. If there is to be a deal in Malta, it will probably involve an attempt to leapfrog over the current impasse.

Both sides now have an interest in moving quickly to final status talks. For Israel, such talks are critical to testing Palestinian intentions before it gives up more land in Oslo's next two withdrawals. For the Palestinians, final status talks are the way to their ultimate goal — a Palestinian state.

Final status talks also provide the way out of the Har Homa dispute. The only possible context in which the Netanyahu government should consider freezing Har Homa is during final status talks, and for a limited time.

Prime minister Menachem Begin agreed to just such a limited freeze during the Camp David negotiations. Such an arrangement would

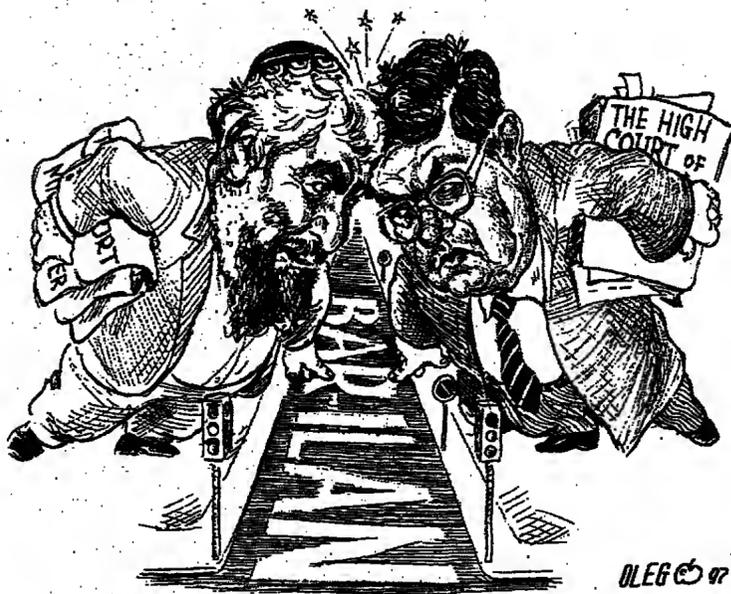
give both sides an incentive to finish the talks quickly — Israel to possibly avoid further interim withdrawals and the Palestinians to avoid the unfreezing of Israeli building in areas that are subject to negotiations.

For Israel, this would not really be an equal trade, because the prospect of having to return to the scheduled withdrawals is much more likely than a resumption of building. As a practical matter, there already is an unofficial settlement freeze, in that Israel is extremely unlikely to significantly expand existing settlements, let alone build new ones. This unofficial freeze would likely become even tighter after final status talks had started in earnest, even if Israel never officially agrees to a freeze.

At the end of the day, all the issues surrounding the current crisis are distractions from the crux of the matter: finding out whether an Israeli-Palestinian peace is really possible. This is far from clear at this point, and the major crises over peripheral issues only add to existing doubts. The red lines for a substantial majority of Israelis are already clear: no return to 1967 lines, no division of Jerusalem, and no substantial foreign army between Israel and the Jordan River. Most Israelis also assume that, eventually, the Palestinians will accept these conditions.

One poll, however, indicates there is much less common ground than Israelis might think. The poll, taken in March by the Nablus-based Center for Palestine Research and Studies, found that 76 percent of Palestinians opposed the reported outline of the Beilin-Abu Mazen plan, though that plan may have stretched Israeli red lines to the limit, if not beyond. When Palestinians were asked about specific points within this permanent status plan, the results were even more sobering: 82 percent opposed a demilitarized Palestinian state, 78 percent opposed exchanging areas where most Israeli settlers live for territory within Israel; 87 percent opposed any Israeli security presence along the Jordan River or the mountain ridge, and 89 percent opposed creating a Palestinian capital from neighborhoods considered part of Jerusalem by Arabs, but which are outside the Israeli-defined municipal city limits.

Given that a number of the compromises rejected so resoundingly by Palestinians might well also be rejected — from the other direction — by a majority of Israelis, it is not at all obvious that it will be possible to come to an agreement. The fights over interim status issues are sapping what little goodwill exists that might be brought to bear in the final status talks. It is time to cut to the chase, and find out where both sides really stand.



Holy war

YOSEF GOELL

The High Court of Justice ruling invalidating Transportation Minister Yitzhak Levy's decision to close Jerusalem's Rehov Bar-Ilan on Shabbat was not a victory for the secular against the observant. Despite haredi attempts to depict it as a one-sided victory for the secular and a cynically motivated defeat for the haredim, it was a valiant, but in all likelihood vain, judicial attempt to reach a compromise between the two sides, for the umpteenth time.

Some argue that it is not for the courts to decide whether the street — which runs through a solidly haredi neighborhood but is also a major transportation artery serving large secular Jewish and Arab neighborhoods in north Jerusalem — should be closed on Shabbat. They forget that the High Court was loathe to get enmeshed in this no-win issue that it had previously sidestepped and referred to the public Zameret Committee. It was the haredi rejection of any reasonable compromise with the interests of the non-observant population that sent the issue back to the High Court.

The court's responsibility is to interpret the law so as to maintain a reasonable balance between the interests of the various parts of the population when they clash and especially when the interests of one side are violated as crassly as they were by Levy, a National Religious Party minister.

A compromise certainly can be worked out. The street can be closed during prayer hours on Shabbat, at great inconvenience to the non-observant population, in return for opening up alternative roads — such as Rehov Yam Suf — that are today closed on Shabbat, and permitting public transportation on Shabbat in

The haredi threat of a 'hot summer' cuts both ways

other non-haredi parts of Jerusalem.

BUT all indications are that the haredim are not interested in compromises that would grant legitimacy to the lifestyles of the non-observant. There is a danger that Levy will seek to interpret the High Court ruling by decreeing that prayer times are in effect throughout all of Shabbat.

In such a case the issue will again go back to the High Court. There is an even greater danger of a return to full-blown violence on Rehov Bar-Ilan. Haredi hotheads have already warned of a "hot summer" in the wake of the High Court decision.

The virtual silence and inaction of haredi rabbinical and political leaders is a mirror image of Yasser Arafat's tactics in regard to the resumption of Palestinian terrorism. While there is no incontrovertible evidence that the rabbis have given the green light to violent demonstrations on Rehov Bar-Ilan it is absolutely clear that they have not given the red light to such acts — except for clucking that throwing rocks and soiled diapers is a violation of Shabbat.

The haredi hotheads and rabbis should realize that a "hot summer" cuts both ways and will make everyone sweat. Renewed haredi violence should be met with sufficient police force. When this proves insufficient either because the police are engaged elsewhere or because of political pressures, non-violent but painful secular counter-attacks against extremely vulnerable haredi interests on other fronts will be fully justified.

A full-blown haredi Kulturkampf has been raging on many fronts for years. It has been stepped up recently because of haredi triumphalism over their political successes. Festering issues such as Rehov Bar-Ilan should, hopefully, serve to mobilize the somnolent secular and non-observant majority of Israelis into a counter-holy war against a militant and intolerant haredi Judaism.

Modern Zionist Israel would never have arisen if our recent founding generations had not revolted against the anti-modern insularity and superstitions of that sect and its rabbis. A modern, Zionist Israel will not exist for long if we do not mobilize and stand up to haredi demands that we return to their primitive and benighted opposition to the adaptation of the millennia-old Jewish civilization to modern life and to renewed Jewish independence in this country.

The writer comments on current affairs.

Hats off to AIPAC

YISRAEL HAREL

Last week, a day after the prime minister left Washington, a very successful demonstration of organized Jewish power in the US drew to a close.

AIPAC, the strongest political lobby in a town with hundreds of similar lobbies managed to bring numerous cabinet secretaries, senators, congressmen and administration officials to its policy conference. Many of these public figures vowed they would not abandon Israel in this difficult time, nor would they allow its capital to be divided, that they would oppose any cuts in assistance, and would over force Israel to capitulate to terror.

In a stirring speech, replete with quotations from the Bible, Vice President Al Gore reiterated statements to this effect. So did Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House, and House Minority Leader Congressman Richard Kermy, as well as Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts who plans to run against Al Gore for the Democratic candidacy for president.

Thousands of enthusiastic delegates cheered their elected representatives on. And Al Gore candidly related how, as a young congressman representing a distant Tennessee agricultural district, completely devoid of any Jewish voters, he was approached by AIPAC and taken under its wing. This brought him the support that later enabled him to get elected to the Senate.

The culminating banquet, attended by more than half the Senate and countless ambassadors, was the best and most

binding political show of all.

WHAT did the ambassadors of Jordan or Morocco or even Russia think of this impressive show of strength? And what about the prime minister of Israel, coming directly from his difficult meeting with Clinton, exhausted, and not just from jet lag.

You have to go a long way to find such unbridled faith

It felt good to be a Jew and an Israeli there, and even the full-scale assault by the American press on construction in "Arab Jerusalem" couldn't dim the intensity. Just to be present at the opening plenary (which many said ostensibly dealt with none of the actual objectives of the organization, that is, wielding political clout for Israel) caused enormous exultation; this is what recharged the batteries of the Jews and Zionists there.

Over 1,500 AIPAC members were present. On two giant screens they watched a short film depicting the life of the guest of honor. His childhood and youth in the Communist Soviet Union; a Christian father and Jewish mother; the soot studying Hebrew which led him to teach others, but also to prison; exile in the gulag after refusing to stop teaching Hebrew; his severe injury, and superhuman efforts to remain alive; the international struggle in

which AIPAC took an active role to free him; his dramatic aliyah to Israel and rapid integration into Israeli society; his stunning political achievement; the swearing in as MK and government minister. Thus was Immigraoov and Absorption Minister Yuli Edelstein introduced.

One had to travel over 10,000km. in order to hear the roar of joy and experience and get caught up in the excitement with which the audience greeted this accomplishment, the realization of this Jewish and Zionist dream. "Am Yisrael Hail!", someone shouted, and another round of applause swept through the hall, and another and yet another.

There were tears as well. An observer, coming from afar, is astounded to find such complete faith and unbridled enthusiasm. And these are people who know how to put complex political strategies into action when needed, and who have no compunction doing whatever it takes to get things done. There was, however, tension and frustration in the air as well, and not only because of the news about the difficult meeting with Clinton.

"Fifty years after the establishment of the State of Israel, and 30 years since the reunification of Jerusalem," said AIPAC Executive Director Howard Kohr, "we are heading for decisions as dramatic as those historic ones. Israel is in the midst of a political struggle, perhaps the fiercest in all of its history. It's important for it to know that an organization like this stands firmly at its side."

The writer is former chairman of the Council of Jewish Residents of Judea, Samaria and Gaza and president of the board of Nekuda.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FREE SPEECH

Sir, — Susan Hattis Rolef (April 7) suggests that democracy and its inherent rights to free speech, free press, free assembly and academic pursuits refer to those speeches and demonstrations that meet with her approval.

Barry Chamish had permission from the Hebrew University and a hall in which to address those students who wished to hear what he had to say. Those students who did not wish to hear him had only to stay away.

In castigating "foreign" and "right-wing" students, Hattis Rolef neglects to address the violence of the Meretz and Ofek demonstrators that resulted in injury to security personnel, and assumes that the final word has been written on the Rabin assassination. Chamish has the right to

draw conclusions that differ from those of the Shamgar Commission, just as journalists who, 34 years after the assassinations of Martin Luther King and John F. Kennedy, continue to question whether James Earl Ray and Lee Harvey Oswald were lone assassins or part of conspiracies.

Farrakhan speaks at universities, Arafat at the UN and their veracity is indeed questionable. Barry Chamish is as entitled to express his ideas as Susan Hattis Rolef is to express hers. However, "mental patient" and "Holocaust denier" are a poor substitute for the honest and rational reportage she claims to reverse.

DR. NINA ZELDIS
Tel Aviv.

INAPPROPRIATE REACTION

Sir, — The lecture of journalist Barry Chamish, slated for April 1 at the Hebrew University, might have passed by and large unnoticed had it not been for the violence it provoked amongst students who were opposed to its being given and who ultimately succeeded in preventing people from attending it.

The subject of the lecture certainly was unpalatable in the extreme: the allegation that the late prime minister's assassination was perpetrated from within the secret services. Nevertheless, for those of us lucky enough to be able to take freedom of speech, Hyde Park Corner style, for granted — when black can be claimed with impunity to be white and the world flat — the reaction of these students, attacking ideas with their fists, must seem, to say the least, inappropriate.

CELIA ULANOVSKY
Ginot Shomron.

DRIVING LICENSES

Sir, — Your article about an 84-year-old lady getting her driving license after 35 tries (March 25) boggles the mind. While I may be happy for the lady in question, that she finally achieved her dream, I am horrified at the thought that one day, I may encounter her driving along the road.

I truly believe that people failing a driving test after five attempts at the most should not receive a driving license ever, as they obviously do not have the basic skills required to be a safe driver.

Perhaps, too, if this were the law, the driving "teachers" would make a serious effort to see that their pupils were properly educated in being safe, responsible and considerate drivers, rather than keep them hanging around to take, and pay for, as many lessons as possible.

MARSHA EDELSTEIN
Ra'anana.

A rosy future for investors

DWAYNE O. ANDREAS

My company, Archer Daniels Midland, knows something about the priority of economics over warfare. We were part of the opening to the East that replaced the Cold War with commerce. We trade with or produce in virtually all of the world's countries.

ADM is one of the world's leading wheat millers, steel crushers and refiners, and traders of agricultural products. We make the fructose corn syrup in your soft drinks, the flour in your bread and muffins, the cooking and salad oil for your dinner. Together with our affiliates and subsidiaries, we buy, sell, crush, refine and process \$20 billion-worth of agricultural and food products throughout the world.

From our perspective, investing in Israel makes a lot of business sense. It has a strong economy that over the past 15 years has grown faster than any other Western country. GDP has grown by an average of six percent over the past seven years. It's now about \$87 billion, or over \$16,000 per capita — one of the world's highest. Exports are growing at an average of six percent in that same period. They've gone from a little over \$12b. in 1992 to \$20.5b. in 1996.

So when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says he expects GDP to double over the next decade, you had better believe it. Especially if his structural reforms take off.

The government's huge privatization program will reduce its role in the economy. It is committed to free markets, trade liberalization and fiscal responsibility. So there's a good environment for investment. Israel, under Netanyahu's leadership, has the capacity to take a free economy to new heights. It has the people, the capital, the technology, the banking system and the know-how to deliver. And through wars, terrorism, and boycott campaigns, it has maintained free institutions and a legal system

that guarantees sanctity of contracts and the protections necessary for free enterprise to flourish. We bear a lot these days about emerging markets, but few of them can match Israel's enormous assets.

Israel also has one of the world's skilled and highly educated work forces. Almost one of every five Israeli workers holds an academic degree, and they have proportion-

It's inevitable: One Middle Eastern trading bloc

ately twice as many scientists and engineers as the US. Furthermore, Israel is the only country in the world that has free trade agreements with both the US and the European Community.

ADM HAS always had an expansive time frame for our strategic investments. Israel fits the bill there too. Israel's prospects for the future are tremendous.

I see it as the gateway to the new Middle East. Israel will be to the entire region what Hong Kong and Singapore are oom for China and southeast Asia. Long-term, it is inevitable that one day there will be a single Middle Eastern trading bloc with Israel as the financial center, its ports as the shipping center, and its industries as the productive center of a new economic powerhouse. As a result of a complete freedom to move capital in and out of Israel, assets in Israel can be carried on balance sheets just as if they were in California or Maine.

That depends on the peace process going forward. Some potential investors are hanging back, waiting to see if it happens. By waiting they could miss the

boat. I am confident that the peace process will continue and peace will come to the region.

All the countries involved have had a taste of the benefits peace can bring. War is a no-win situation.

It just takes time to work out the right formulas and to build the right political climate. The progress that's already been made was unthinkable a few short years ago. Even those who predicted the new government would back out of the process have been proven wrong.

That doesn't mean the road to peace will be smooth. Every so often we'll go through one of those episodes where it looks like things are about to fall apart. But that happens in any negotiating process where the issues are vital to the interests of the parties involved.

Israel's trade and joint ventures with its neighbors have grown. Even in former times, there was always a back-door trade no one mentioned. Now it's out in the open. And Netanyahu's policies will build on the foundation that is already there.

Just think of the benefits to the world if Israeli agricultural technology can be spread throughout the region and the globe. If my dream of an international program of agricultural development for the emerging nations becomes a reality, Israeli technology will be at its center.

And a world in which millions are condemned to unproductive lives and early deaths by hunger and malnutrition can become a world in which productive people trade among nations that truly turn their swords into plowshares.

The writer is chairman of the board and chief executive of Archer Daniels Midland Company. This article is adapted from a speech given to the Israeli Investment Forum in New York earlier this month.

SMALL-MINDED

Sir, — For one who espouses a new politics of meaning and a return to Jewish morality, Michael Lerner is exceedingly small-minded and hateful in his assessment of Prime Minister Netanyahu's current policies ("On transcending tribalism," April 2).

What concerns me most as a new immigrant to Israel is that Lerner — safely ensconced in his San Francisco pulpit and the editorial offices of *Tikkun* Magazine — presumes to preach to Israelis about "love and caring" and to blame Israel for the undermining of young American Jews' loyalty to Judaism.

There may be a market for Lerner's own "stingy whinnings" among the pure Jewish souls of California and New York, but it just won't wash on the buses of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. I thank him for his coocern and if we are not the "light unto the nations" that is his dream and prayer — too bad, it's his problem, not ours.

MARTIN S. KALSON

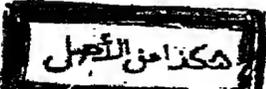
Ginot Shomron.

EMPTY CHAIR

Sir, — When the gates of the Soviet Union were closed, many Jews in Israel and the free world left an empty chair at Jewish celebrations including the Seder table to symbolize and emphasize the fact of the Soviet Jews' absence. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the opening of gates to all who wish to emigrate, the need and rationale for the empty chair is no more.

However, this Pessah Seder, I urge Jonathan Pollard's fellow Jews who, unlike him, are fortunate enough to live in freedom, to leave an empty chair for the man who, for more than a decade, languishes in a prison cell because of his abiding love for the State of Israel for whose freedom and well-being he sacrificed his own. Let this chair be empty until Jonathan Pollard is released and allowed to come to Israel and occupy that chair. If nothing else, it will show him that he and his sacrifice are not forgotten.

RACHEL RAPEN
West Bloomfield, Michigan.



Pessah fun

By HELEN KAYE

The children are home from school. The seder dishes have been cleared, it's spring and Hoi Hamo'ed Pessah is rich with activities from watching sculptors shape stones in Galilee, to four days of children's theater in Haifa, circus acts in Tel Aviv, not to mention rhythm and blues, pop, rock, jazz and klezmer music.

Going from North to South, let's start with *Even Bagalit*, or *Stone in the Galilee*, at Ma'alot Taushtia in Western Galilee. Here, every year, local and visiting sculptors create statues from local stone on site and people can watch them doing it. This year there are 15 sculptors. There are also street-theater events, symposia, performance art, walks and hikes. Look for the remarkable Klipa theater on rafts out in the lake and David Berry's Mimmo group from Tivon. Events are daily from Wednesday to Friday between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Information: (04) 957-88667.

Moving down a little, to Misgav, there are *Days of Music and Nature* from April 24 to 26, with a program of music and hikes for all the family. Big names include Ahinoam Nini and Ehad Banai, Hava-Alberstein, David Deor and Nurit Galron, not to mention Bach from Michael Melzer and the Baroque Players together with Mozart's letters, a theatrical concert from actor Moshe Bekor and pianist Astrit Baltzan, among others.

Haifa is the venue for the annual Children's Theater Festival this year from April 22 to 25; four days of plays and street theater for the younger set and young at heart with 26 plays to choose from, including *White Fang* from Russia and *Mur Mur*, an acrobatic show, from Canada. There are also seven free street-theater shows, and it all takes place in and around the Haifa Theater. Tickets and information at all ticket offices for the above two events.

Dropping into the Beit She'an valley, children's favorites Yael

Bar-Zohar and Michael Hanegbi preside over The Children's Valley April 23 and 24 at six different sites. Events include an exhibition of Haggadot, a storytelling competition, a talent show, mime performances and more. Information: (06) 685-6219.

In Tel Aviv, celebrating 110 years since the first stone was laid in the Neveh Tzedek neighborhood, *Ma'asot Venigunim* takes over the Suzanne Dellal Center April 23 and 24 with two days of Yiddishkeit, or Jewish celebration in words and music. Special shows include *Yiddish on Broadway* with Miki Kam, Eli Gorenstein, Anat Atzmon and more, as well as authentic clips from New York's Second Avenue theaters in the '40s and '50s and songs from Dan Almagor's best-known hit *Once There Was a Hassid*.

Across town at the Elnav Music Center in Gan Ha'ir, *Black and Blues* is the first international Black music festival from April 22 to 24. Featured artists include pianist/singer Mark Betson with Amee, (both were with Arrested Development), keyboardist Ken Saydak and saxophonists Walter Blanding and Abraham Burton. Tickets at ticket offices or box office.

And reaching the south, Amee, Betson, Nini (with her partner Gil Doe), Arcadi Duchin, Ehad Banai, Barry Sataroff and Shlomo Bar with the Breira Hatvit Ensemble will be the headliners at the Dead Sea Festival from April 22 to 24. The festival is north of the Dead Sea, in the Kalya area. Information: (02) 994-3222. Tickets at ticket offices.

And everybody loves clowns, right? The Moscow Circus is coming to Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem with its big star, clown Oleg Popov, as well as trapeze daredevils, acrobats and animal acts. The ringmasters are our own Michal Yanai and Gil Sassever. The circus is at the Sports Stadium from April 23 to 28 and will have three shows daily between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets at ticket offices or box office.



The Moscow Circus sends in the clowns during Hoi Hamo'ed with Oleg Popov.

And let's not forget the national parks, regional councils, kibbutzim and other local groupings that have

the family in mind whether it's music, ceramics, beekeeping or petting zoos. The National Parks Service information is (03) 576-

6888. Other venues include the western Negev, (07) 994-0228, and the Yov Yehuda area, (08) 850-2240, or for hikes (08) 558-4230.

REVIEWS

in brief

Opera

Georgian basso profundo Paata Burchuladze (Sparafucile in the New Israeli Opera production of Verdi's *Rigoleto*), displayed a glorious dark voice descending to fabulous depths, in his recital of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra series recital. His vocal expression in Russian songs and romances - unfortunately only one half of the program - above all those by Rachmaninoff, was immensely powerful at times and extremely delicate and soft at others.

Verdi's opera arias were rendered with dramatic force and emotional intensity. A sometimes noticeable Russian accent and voice production, however, did not always fit the Italian vocal style. A moving impersonation of King Philip's sorrow and despair from *Don Carlo*, and an overpowering rendition of La Calurnia from Rossini's *Barber of Seville* were among the program's highlights. And yet, it was in a Georgian song, as an encore, that his voice and heart most obviously felt at home. Pianist Ludmila Ivanova was a discreet, attentive and confidence-inspiring accompanist.

Ury Eppstein

Concert

One of the rare Israeli double-bass solo works, *Epludes for S.Y. Agnon's Bid mi Yaneha* ("In the Prime of her Days"), was performed at Agnon House by its composer, Max Stern, interlacing with the story's reading by Michal Govrin. Composed especially as musical illustration to be played simultaneously with the story's narration, the extreme sensitivity with which the music captures the elusive mood of Agnon's masterpiece can well be appreciated. A discreet use of Ashkenazi cantorial chant fragments together with improvisational-sounding phrases, highlighting the text's significance without overdoing it.

Michal Govrin's reading, ingenious in its simplicity, deliberate lack of dramatization and subtle attention to many hidden meanings, did full justice to Agnon's highly charged and spell-binding work.

Ury Eppstein

Arvo Part's *Collage on the Theme 'Bach'*, in the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra's Subscription Concert No. 6, conducted by Estonian Eri Klas, uses the Baroque as a stepping stone for indulging in dissonance. The satirizing of this time-honored style followed in the footsteps of Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*.

In Lutoslawski's Cello Concerto, the tortured, depressed, solitary cello comes under the virulent attack of aggressive, brutal, relentless orchestral forces. Russian-born, now Germany-based soloist Boris Pergamenschikov's playing was immensely moving.

The orchestra, under Klas's direction, performed Tchaikovsky's *Pathetique* with admirable plasticity of articulation. Tempi were unhurried even when fast. This allowed one to savor the shaping of a phrase and to be gripped by the building up of a tremendous climax.

Ury Eppstein

It is not often that the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra presents new musicians to its audience. Usually, the roster of soloists and conductors who appear with the IPO are old friends who perform regularly in Israel. Sunday night, at Tel Aviv's Mann Auditorium, Italian maestro Daniele Gatti made one of the most exciting NIO debuts in a long while. Under his precise yet very flamboyant and Mediterranean baton, the orchestra emerged as a cohesive and exciting musical entity reveling in two works written in the 20th century.

There was a time in which the mere mention of the names Hindemith and Bartok would have caused music lovers away from the concert hall. This time around, both Hindemith's Concerto Music for Strings and especially Bartok's Concerto for Orchestra were received with an enormous and enthusiastic reception. In Bartok's most demanding opus, the IPO was simply playing in its best form in a long while.

In between, Shlomo Mintz played the very symphonic Brahms Violin Concerto in a most captivating manner. The transition between the tranquil and touching second movement and the boisterous finale was electrifying, as was the performance of the second movement in its entirety, not to mention the glorious playing of the last movement of the concerto. Mintz is one of the greatest violinists of our generation and his rendition of Brahms suggested once again what a great piece of music this concerto is and what a great violinist Mintz is. Gatti and the orchestra provided the lively accompaniment with verve and aplomb, yet without taking anything away from the soloist.

Michael Ajzenstadt

Dance

The dance competition for young aspiring choreographers *Shades of Dance* took place at Suzanne Dellal last week. Some years showcase an outstanding, brave new talent that is mature, artistically ripe and with a distinct voice of its own. Nine years ago this was the case with Nir Ben Gal and Liat Dror's *Two-Room Apartment*. This year, the picture is foggier. The assorted shades on the palette of the 24 choreographers include belly dance, jazz, tap, buto (no ballet) and every available mance of contemporary dance. Only a few are truly inventive, most are, at best, better dancers than creators.

The jury chose *Angel* by Idit Herman and Dmitri Tolpanov, an imaginative work that contains some stunningly beautiful visual scenes, using readily available materials. In the opening scene, a dancer in a regal dress made of aluminum foil faces a mirror and, aided by music and lighting, transforms the stage into a decaying palace. Just as impressive was the desert storm scene in which the dancers are vagabonds battling the wind.

I was intrigued by *Channel al Kuds*, danced by Emanuel Gat, music and text by Mariano Weinstein. The two artists combined their talent to perform one of the bolder, fresher, funnier works. They did what most young dancers neglect completely: They let major political issues seep into their work. Smart and sharp with upbeat text, sophisticated sound, articulate dancing and unusual attention to detail, the outstanding *Channel al Kuds* was a highlight of *Shades*. The jury awarded second prize to two choreographers who excelled as dancers, Yuval Pick and Jerome Maier.

Belly dancer Orly Portel charmed the audience and was among the dancers who were justifiably commended.

Ora Braffman

Three events at the Jerusalem Rubin Academy of Music and Dance's "International Week" were devoted to dance.

Most of the program was devised by Moshe Kedem - six items in which his acute awareness of both the youthful abilities and limitations of the dancers combined with a certain technical sameness but with an admirable freshness. Choreographed by Nina Timofeyeva (music by Kopytman), it was a romantic-classical work in which she herself also danced. The international note was emphasized by a modern dance program, when works by Alvin Ailey and Ze'eva Cohen were included as well as Amir Kolben, Barak Marshall and others.

Anat Shamgar and Jean Claude Jones provided a program of "Movement and Improvisation" - she as dancer, he as a double-bass player - in their well-known characteristic styles.

Dora Sowden

Yiddish showtime

By HELEN KAYE

Comedienne Hanna Laszlo and singer Dudu Fisher are the headliners in the Yiddish Theater's 10th anniversary festival (Israel Yiddish Theater) festive 10th anniversary variety show, with *Rosinke mit Mandlen* (Raisins and Almonds), which opens May 17.

According to the stellar duo, Yiddish is a state of mind, and "every couple of years I try to come back to my first audiences," says Fisher, who's off to star in London's West End production of *Phantom of the Opera* next October. His first audiences *kvelled* as Fisher's lush tenor soared in Yiddish cantorial numbers.

"I dream in Yiddish," says Laszlo, explaining that Yiddish was her first language, the rich Lodz Yiddish she spoke with her parents. "There's something very special about the Yiddish song and I come to Yiddish humor with reverence because I have illustrious examples to follow, like Dezigan and Schumacher."

The '97/98 season opened with *Yosha Kalb*, a drama of misguided and misplaced passions by L.B. Singer's elder brother, Israel Yehoshua. Also in the line-up are *Sender Blank* by Sholem

Aleichem, freely adapted from Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, a one-man show from Yiddish theater stalwart Yankelo Bodo, and *The Galician Troubadour*, a play based on the poems of Mordechai Gebirtig, a Cracow carpenter whom the Nazis shot in 1942 and which IYT founder and artistic director Shmuel Atzmon describes as a "sort of Yiddish *Under Milk Wood*." And for those who don't know Yiddish, there's simultaneous translation into Hebrew.

The IYT owes its existence to a German mayor's offer of cash. Ten years ago, Atzmon was playing his long-running *The Shmuelis Segal and Rodensky* in Hessen.

After the show, Atzmon was saying how Israel needed a Yiddish theater because of the language's rich heritage and because there is renewed interest in Yiddish worldwide, and the mayor offered her DM 100,000 as startup money.

"I came home and told Chich [former Tel Aviv mayor Shlomo Lahat] and he told me never mind the German cash. The municipality will underwrite the theater."

And today, the energetic Lahat is IYT's chairman of the board.



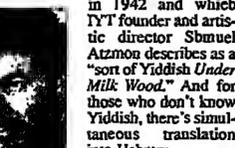
Jakob Dylan seems to have made the right career choice.

music leans towards soft-rock ballads. "One Fishin'" is reggae lite, and guest vocalist Karen Huberman turns in a stellar job on one of the two versions of "Eilat."

But overall, the songwriting is ordinary. Daitch is a bland frontman and the ideas expressed are more satisfying than the performances.

KARL JENKINS is far from a household word, but his 1995 album *Songs of the Sanctuary* under his working name Adiemus has become one of the most successful contemporary classical albums of recent years.

The follow-up, *Cantata Mundi*, contains the same chorale sound, world-music percussion and pipes as the debut, and is just as enticing. Listen to it after a hard day, and let your mind drift away. You'll wind up on an international sonic journey that is as soothing as it is evocative.



Dudu Fisher (Sami Farag)

Three *Shmuelis* with the late Shmuelis Segal and Rodensky in Hessen.

After the show, Atzmon was saying how Israel needed a Yiddish theater because of the language's rich heritage and because there is renewed interest in Yiddish worldwide, and the mayor offered her DM 100,000 as startup money.

"I came home and told Chich [former Tel Aviv mayor Shlomo Lahat] and he told me never mind the German cash. The municipality will underwrite the theater."

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IN TUNE

The new Dylan

By DAVID BRINN

It takes a lot of courage to follow in your father's footsteps when they belong to Bob Dylan. However, one listen to *The Wallflowers* debut, featuring Dylan offspring Jakob on guitar, vocals and songwriting, will prove that this offspring made the right choice.

Every once in a while a band's first release defies reason and displays years of seasoned experience. Such is the case with *Bringing Down the Horse*, a major hit for months in North America, but released here only recently.

Dylan doesn't ape his father's style, but some genetic kinship

BRINGING DOWN THE HORSE

THE WALLFLOWERS (Red Art)

STEVE DAITCH AND THE ISRAELI FEEL HARMONIC ORCHESTRA

ADIEMUS II - CANTATA MUNDI Karl Jenkins (Helicon)

seeps through, to provide some moments of vocal *deja-vu*. And he can even keep a tune. For once, the worn moniker "A new Dylan" rings true.

The band's sound is both contemporary and timeless, combining a dense, rock 'n' roll approach with the multi-vocal style and world-weary harmonies of The Band. Fans of Counting Crows may

notice some similarities in the synthesis of '60s styles with '90s energy (Crow's frontman Adam Durwitz guests on one song).

Smart, mainstream, guitar-driven rock 'n' roll is pretty commonplace if you know where to find it, but *The Wallflowers* inject a chorus here, a snippet of a Hammond B3 organ there, or an unforgettable melody everywhere to create something that you want to hear over and over again.

A friend in his late 30s said that *The Wallflowers* were the first "Gen-X" CD that he had bought, and he was quite proud of his ability to like something in the '90s, until he learned of the Dylan connection. Jakob Dylan and *The Wallflowers* may be the missing link to unite teens and their parents.

INTERESTING more for its concept than its execution, Steve Daitch and the Feel Harmonic Orchestra is worth a listen if you're an immigrant from an English-speaking country or considering taking the plunge.

Daitch, an ad man by profession, and an Israeli resident since he left Montreal in 1992, has fashioned the first (that I know of) English-language CD about the trials and tribulations of making aliyah and Zionism, from a secular viewpoint.

Backed by some of Israel's top session musicians, Daitch performs a batch of original compositions with names like "Eilat," "Gal Down from Golan Town" and "Eretz."

The playing's impeccable and Daitch writes some insightful, if occasionally stilted, lyrics. The

Rifkin bops to Bach and Joplin

By MICHAEL AJZENSTADT

When the phone call from Jerusalem reached Joshua Rifkin in his home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, he was, to put it mildly, somewhat skeptical about the offer put to him. Because the 53-year-old American conductor had already been invited several times to perform in Israel, but on each occasion the performances did not in the end go ahead. But all that has changed now, as he finally makes his long-awaited Israeli debut on Thursday evening, leading the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra in a program of music by Bach, Handel and Haydn.

The following night Rifkin switches the maestro's podium to the pianist's stool as he plays Scott Joplin ragtime music at the side stage of the Performing Arts Center in Tel Aviv.

Enjoying the spectacular Jerusalem view from the Mishkenot Sha'ananim Guest House where he is now staying, Rifkin talks enthusiastically about his career and musical beliefs. Is there any clear connection between Bach and Joplin?

"I have often been asked this question and the frivolous answer is, yes - myself. Other than that I'm not really certain. Both, of course, are harmonically lucid and beautifully crafted, but most important both speak to something in me."

Bach was not originally on the program of this week's concert. "I didn't want to do Bach but the orchestra insisted." And no wonder. Rifkin is the founder and conductor of the American-based Bach Ensemble, which nowadays has more work in Europe than in the US. But while Rifkin's own ensemble is a period instrument musical entity, this week he conducts a regular symphony orchestra playing Bach on so-called modern instruments. And it will be the first time Rifkin does that.

"What instruments the musicians play on is not as important. What is important is to make music with good musicians. You can achieve the necessary phrasing with any kind of machinery."

Rifkin grew up in New York in a socialist family, which explains his somewhat remote connection to Judaism, Zionism and Israel. "Music is always part of my life, after all I was good for nothing else.

I was a second-generation socialist. I did not go to Sunday school and didn't have what you would consider a proper bar mitzva.

"In fact after what some rabbis said recently I would probably not be considered a proper Jew anyway. Of course living in New York was growing up in a place in which being Jewish wasn't an issue at all."

There was a time when Rifkin was considered a very serious composer as well. But for the moment he is concentrating on performing. "I studied composition in Juilliard with Steve Reich and Philip Glass but I lost faith in serialism and so I stopped writing. When I'm old and out of work I know I will return to write."

Once the concerts are over, Rifkin and his family will remain in Israel for an extra week. "When we landed here last night we already just felt extremely good. I sincerely hope I come back more often now."

THEATER REVIEW

A class act

By NAOMI DOUDAI

Terrence McNally's *Master Class*, which uses the 1971 Maria Callas Master Class at Juilliard as a setting in which to treat art as a religious order, with the artist as acolyte and even addict to her art, looks a likely winner among Habimah's latest productions.

This is mainly down to Jonathan Pape's crisp direction, Miki Ben-Canaan's intriguing design, and the very polished performances of four young classical singers.

"La Divina" is presented with all her glamour, acid bonosity and flaming temperament in the act of instructing would-be divas in her art.

Chen Reiss (first soprano), Liliach Koch (second soprano), both of whom are coached by Bibiana Goldenthal, and Yevgeny Shapovalov

accompanied by Nir Haim Berger, are all enchanting performers, as delightful to listen to as to watch.

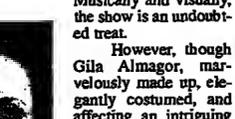
Musically and visually, the show is an undoubted treat.

However, though Gila Almagor, marvelously made up, elegantly costumed, and affecting an intriguing Italian patner, gets off to a good start in the star role, she fails to sustain credibility through much of her presentation.

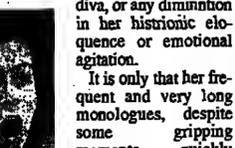
The trouble is not with her tempestuous diva, or any diminution in her histrionic eloquence or emotional agitation.

It is only that her frequent and very long monologues, despite some gripping moments, quickly become so mannered, they begin to pall.

At times, too, she piles on the passion till her voice betrays her, descending into hoarse gutturals and a husky garbly (tenor), that tend to trivialize the role.



Gila Almagor



Chen Reiss

TOWER RECORDS' TOP 15

THIS LAST WEEKS ON		WEEK	WEEK	CHARTS	ARTIST	TITLE
#1	1	9	YEHUDA POLIKER	LIVE		
#2	2	4	V/A	PARTY TIME 3		
#3	22	2	AVIV GEFEN	FULL MOON		
#4	6	3	V/A	NOW 36		
#5	NEW!	1	ACHINOAM NINI	ACHINOAM NINI '97		
#6	RE	1	ALANIS MORISSETTE	JAGGED LITTLE PILL		
#7	17	56	SHLOMO ARTZI	TWO		
#8	RE	1	TONI BRAXTON	SECRETS		
#9	RE	1	OST	PULP FICTION		
#10	4	3	YEHUDIT RAVITZ	WHAT KIND OF GIRL		
#11	14	6	U2	POP		
#12	12	2	MEIR ARIEL	BERNARD & LOUISE		
#13	8	2	GLYKERIA	MAGIC NIGHTS		
#14	9	9	OST	BREAKING THE WAVES		
#15	20	55	RITA	COLLECTION		

Tower Records' top-selling albums for last week

BUSINESS

in brief

Bezeq share offer approved

The Knesset Finance Committee yesterday approved the sale of 24 percent of Bezeq. This will reduce the government stake in the company to 52%.

It is anticipated that 10% will be floated on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange and the remaining 14% will be sold in bundles to foreign investors. The sale is likely to go ahead in two or three months. The approval was welcomed by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Communications Minister Limor Livnat.

David Harris

Investec to expand IGB stake

The Johannesburg Investec Group, which holds a controlling share in Israel General Bank, announced plans yesterday to invest \$18 million in it in the framework of a rights offer.

Investec, one of the largest banking groups in South Africa, purchased a 52.4 percent stake in IGB for \$48.2 m. last December. The purchase was part of the bank's strategic decision to invest here. Investec said this next round of investing is part of its plan to expand some of IGB's activities.

Jennifer Friedlin

Kolber to chair ECI

ECI Telecom Ltd. yesterday announced the appointment of Jonathan Kolber as chairman of the company's board of directors, effective today. He replaces Yosef Rosen.

Jennifer Friedlin

Ministry seizes 4,500 kilograms of foul meat

Some 4,500 kilograms of meat, unfit for human consumption, were seized at several locations in the early hours of Monday morning, by a special team from the Agriculture Ministry. The raids were made at Kafir Yasif, Kabul and Makr, and the meat immediately destroyed.

David Harris

Lod-Ramle Development Co. to be sold

The ministerial committee for privatization yesterday approved the sale of the government's 95-percent stake in Lod and Ramle's District Development Company Ltd. The sale will be directed at a single private investor or group.

David Harris

Nasdaq proposes tougher IPO rules

By JENNIFER FRIEDLIN

In an effort to improve the quality and stability of New York's Nasdaq Stock Market, officials have submitted a proposal to the Securities Exchange Commission to raise the market value requirement for companies wishing to go public, a senior Nasdaq representative in Tel Aviv said yesterday.

If approved, companies wishing to go public on Nasdaq's National Market would have to have a minimal market value of \$8 million rather than the \$3m. valuation currently required, while the SmallCap market would require a valuation of \$5m. instead of \$1m.

"Whenever there have been problems with companies on Nasdaq it has been at the small-size end of the continuum," said Eileen Taverner, Nasdaq's vice president of interna-

tional marketing, currently in Israel for Nasdaq's annual conference.

In addition to raising the market valuation standard, Nasdaq also proposes barring any security that trades below \$1 from remaining listed on the Nasdaq National and SmallCap markets, and requiring SmallCap issues to comply with corporate governance standards that currently only pertain to the National Market.

The changes will not affect any of the Israeli companies listed on Nasdaq, Taverner said, adding that none of the Israeli companies listed in the last 18 months would have fallen below the new standards.

The modifications reflect the success Nasdaq has had in becoming the world's second largest exchange.

The volume of trading on Nasdaq totalled \$3.3 trillion last year, second after the New York Stock Exchange whose dollar volume of trading was \$4.06t. In comparison, the London Stock Exchange, the third largest exchange, recorded trading volume of \$1.38t.

Other proposed changes include altering Nasdaq's market capitalization test to accommodate companies that might not qualify for Nasdaq's National Market due to certain accounting conventions. Nasdaq is also considering subjecting auditors of Nasdaq-listed companies to peer review.

Nasdaq's qualification requirements for the National Market and SmallCap Market were last revised in 1989 and 1991, respectively.

Netanyahu, Frenkel content with shekel's rate mechanism

By DAVID HARRIS

Despite the dollar breaking the psychological NIS 3.40 barrier yesterday, to end the day at a record high 3.4060, the Bank of Israel said it is firm in its opposition to abandoning or even amending the so-called diagonal mechanism.

The central bank's exchange rate mechanism is designed to prevent the shekel from appreciating or depreciating more than seven percent from a middle point drawn from a weighted value of the difference between the inflation rate here and in the world's five leading economies. This, graphed over 12 months, creates a diagonal line.

When market trading pushes or pulls the shekel beyond these extremes, the Bank of Israel intervenes in trading to keep it within the confines of its self-imposed bands.

"The new dollar record has nothing to do with our policy on the diagonal," a central bank spokesman said. "We have not changed our opinion on this matter."

In the Prime Minister's Office there is also firm support for the retention of the diagonal mechanism. Binyamin Netanyahu's economic adviser Moshe Leon confirmed yesterday. "It must not be changed," he said.

However, Leon did say that the central bank's continued purchase of currency is having an adverse effect on the state budget, which is already reeling with a NIS 1.2 billion deficit after the first quarter.

A senior central bank source agreed that sticking with the diagonal mechanism costs. "We don't deny that, nor have we hidden the fact," he said.

In late January and February an

internal central bank debate was held as to the future of the diagonal, with some calling for its widening, but bank Governor Jacob Frenkel remained firm in his opposition to any reform.

"These discussions are now all at an end," the spokesman said.

Later meetings with Finance Minister Dan Meridor came to the same conclusion.

The Finance Ministry said the diagonal mechanism is not the issue; "that is just a control method," a ministry source said yesterday. "For us the key is to lower interest rates, which will enable lower interest loans."

"I am in favor of immediate and total liberalization," said economist Dan Galai, the joint managing director of Sigma Portfolio Selection Consulting & Management Ltd. "If we keep the diagonal mechanism, then interest rates will have to

remain high and the bank will continue to buy dollars."

Galai argued that by liberalizing, there would be a revaluation at first, which in turn would lead to an end of the high interest rates policy and consequent need to purchase currency.

An excessively strong shekel hampers exporters, whose foreign-currency denominated income loses value in local terms. The diagonal mechanism allows the shekel to float so long as the market does not lead it beyond the bands which envelope it.

When the markets seek to trade the shekel for prices which exceed the diagonal's bands, the Bank of Israel intervenes in trading - buying shekels when the currency is too weak and selling when it is too strong - in order to bring the currency back into the diagonal's limits.

Discount Bank 17% offer yields NIS 212m.

By FELICE MARANZ

The government yesterday floated a 17-percent stake in Israel Discount Bank on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, raising NIS 212 million in a heavily oversubscribed flotation, according to MI Holdings, the company which administers the sale of the government's holdings in the banking sector.

In all, investors bought five million shares and nine million options, generating for the government an income more than 30% larger than the NIS 156m. it had originally anticipated, MI Holdings general manager Meir Yaacobson said.

The government plans to shrink its stake in Discount, the nation's third largest bank, to 51.5% by the end of the year to from its current 79%.

Holding company IDB, which currently owns 13.17% of the bank, did not increase its stake to it, nor does it intend to do so at this stage, according to managing director Eliyahu Cohen.

Market analysts from the Meitav company said at the end of the trading day that the Discount share offer "shows that the market is coming alive." (Blomberg)

Biran: Arms sales to total \$1.7b. in '97, \$2b. next year

By STEVE RODAN

Israel expects to export about \$1.7 billion of weapons this year and \$2b. in 1998, Defense Ministry director-general Itan Biran said in an interview published this week in *Bitahon*, the magazine of Defense Ministry employees.

Biran does not elaborate on his assessment of arms exports; in fact the magazine does not even quote him directly making these assessments.

"Regarding security exports, the Defense Ministry director-general is a man of good news," *Bitahon* reads.

"He speaks of a total of \$1.7b. in 1997 and of a goal for exports to the tune of \$2b. in 1998/99."

Biran's forecast contrasts with that of senior executives in the defense industries, who say the country is facing increasing competition to sell weapons from the US following new mergers that have boosted efficiency and lowered costs.

In mid-March, senior defense executives warned that unless the industry embarked on significant layoffs and eliminated duplication, exports would decline and research and development would be underfunded.

But other executives said Biran's forecasts are in line with those of the larger defense contractors in Israel, who view new markets in Asia and Western Europe as having great growth potential.

Arms exports last year were reported at \$1.6b.

This was largely because of the \$650 million deal which Israel Aircraft Industries signed with Turkey for the upgrading of 54 F-4 Phantom jets.



America Online launches service in Japan

America Online Inc. chairman Steve Case talks to reporters yesterday in Tokyo, where he announced the launch of AOL's online service in Japan. Case said he expects the Japanese market to become the largest user of AOL's services outside the US. Case declined to comment on market rumors of merger talks with CompuServe Corp., an affiliate of H&R Block Inc. (Reuters)

Russia records 1st quarterly growth in post-USSR era

By CHRISTINA LING

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia's economy in the first three months of this year recorded its first quarterly growth since the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, official figures showed yesterday.

But some economists said recent controversial changes in the way the numbers are calculated raised doubts over whether the data gave a true picture of the actual economic situation.

"The great decline in the Russian economy over the last decade has

practically ended," Chairman of the State Statistics Committee Yuri Yurkov told a news conference.

Figures released by the committee showed gross domestic product in the first quarter of 1997 was 0.2 percent higher than a year earlier - the first growth after seven years of plummeting output.

By the end of last year, the economy was only 61% of its size when the Soviet Union broke up and reforms began, returning to levels last seen in 1979.

But some analysts said the figures left much to be desired.

"The Russian economy is a bit blind; it's not clear what total revenues are, as well as other key indicators needed to analyze the economy overall," said Vladimir Gurevich, deputy editor in chief of *Moscow News*.

Critics said the quarterly figures were as suspect as rosy industrial production and GDP figures for the beginning of the year, which were achieved by increasing the weight of the thriving shadow economy, which operates outside the official tax framework, in calculations.

"I refuse to get too excited about it. My impression is that they are over-representing what's going on, said Roland Nash, chief economist at Moscow investment bank Renaissance Capital.

The committee said the shadow economy made up about 23% of GDP at the beginning of the year, while earlier calculations gave it a 20% weighting.

But it says an upcoming revision of 1996 figures used for comparison will not lead to significant changes in the statistics already published.

Prime Minister's Office: Rafael will be sold

By DAVID HARRIS

Rafael, the Armaments Development Authority will be privatized within the next two years, along with Israel Aircraft Industries and TAAS Israel Industries. Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's economic adviser Moshe Leon said yesterday.

The intention to privatize Rafael is a major shift in policy. Until now the government had said it would consider divesting the NIS 1 billion loss-making authority from the IDF and turning it into a full-fledged government company.

The three military companies will be sold by 1999, but some of their subsidiaries would have to be kept in state control for security reasons. As far as this year is concerned, Leon predicted that inflation will

remain within the government-set seven percent to 10% target, with today's Consumer Price Index announcement for March also in line with government expectations.

There is a need for a widespread reform of the tax system, said Leon, who listed a variety of examples of discrepancies that currently exist. He pointed out that VAT is not as high here as in Europe, and in answer to a question agreed that there is room to increase VAT if the other indirect taxes are lowered. "This must be a multi-year program," he added.

In the field of privatization, Leon said the government is confident of reaching its NIS 4b. target this year, having already received some NIS 720 million. The government is currently working to sell its remaining stake in Israel Chemicals Ltd., having sold 17% to the Eisenberg Group two weeks ago.

Other companies to be sold this year include Afridar (Ashkelon real estate developer), the Israel Foreign Trade Risks Insurance Corp Ltd. (which still needs some structural changes before work can commence), the Arad and Dead Sea Region Development Co. Ltd. and Karta Central Jerusalem Development Co. Ltd.

Despite its current poor financial situation, there is hope Zim Israel Navigation Co. Ltd. will also be sold soon.

With regard to the banks, following yesterday's flotation of shares in Bank Discount, attention will turn to Bank Leumi next month, then to the sale of the controlling shares in Bank Hapoalim, "with a possible sale of the con-

trolling share in another bank later this year," according to Leon.

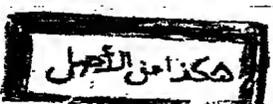
Work is also under way through two government teams to downsize and implement efficiencies across the board in the civil service. Leon refused to talk about job losses, saying it would be "irresponsible" at this stage.

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We invite you to join veteran New York financial expert Philip Goldsmith of **KENMAR** for a discussion on "Alternative Investments - A Guide to Protecting Your Portfolio" this Saturday evening, April 19, 1997, at 8:30 P.M. at the Holiday Inn, Jerusalem.
Mr. Goldsmith will be exploring "alternative" investments and will also demonstrate how it is possible to increase your investment return while decreasing your short term - and long term - risk.
Limited seats available Refreshments will be served
To reserve your seats at - "Alternative Investments - A Guide to Protecting Your Portfolio," please contact Mr. Allan Myburgh by Friday, April 18 at 02-624 0285 or 050-480-669

ISRAELI MONEY MARKETS				
Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) (11.9.96)				
Currency (deposit for)	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS	
U.S. dollar (\$250,000)	4.750	5.000	5.375	
Pound sterling (£100,000)	3.875	4.000	4.250	
German mark (DM 200,000)	1.825	1.825	2.125	
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	0.825	0.750	1.000	
Yen (10 million yen)				
(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)				
Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (14.4.97)				
CHECKS AND TRANSFERS				
Currency basket	Buy	Sell	Banknotes	Buy
U.S. dollar	3.6508	3.7097		3.6701
German mark	3.3788	3.4338	3.32	3.48
French franc	5.4848	5.5733	1.92	2.03
Japanese yen (100)	0.8822	0.9227	0.89	0.91
Dutch florin	2.6728	2.7158	2.62	2.78
Swiss franc	1.7448	1.7727	1.71	1.80
Sri Lankan rupee	2.9281	2.9403	2.28	2.38
Norwegian krone	0.4850	0.4829	0.43	0.48
Danish krone	0.8148	0.8232	0.47	0.50
Finland mark	0.6667	0.6873	0.64	0.68
Canadian dollar	2.4173	2.4583	0.60	0.64
Australian dollar	2.8328	2.8751	2.87	2.50
S. African rand	0.7583	0.7708	2.58	2.72
Belgian franc (10)	0.9607	0.9681	0.88	0.78
Austrian schilling (10)	1.9261	1.9324	0.88	0.98
Italian lire (1000)	2.7674	2.8284	2.73	2.58
Jordanian dinar	4.7000	5.0300	1.95	2.06
Egyptian pound	0.8600	1.0500	4.70	5.03
Irish punt	3.8224	3.8943	0.96	1.05
Spanish peseta (100)	5.2268	5.3118	5.13	5.38
	2.3283	2.3858	2.28	2.40
*These rates vary according to bank. **Bank of Israel.				
SOURCE: BANK LEUMI				



Count bank offer yields 212m.

Government yesterday... raising NIS 212 million...

Company IDB, which... 13.17% of the... increase its stake...

Arms to total... in '97, next year...

Security exports... director-general...

Senior defense... on significant...

Executives are... in line with...

Bank of Israel...

ISRAELI SHARES IN NEW YORK

Table with columns: TASE, AMEX, NASDAQ. Lists various Israeli companies and their share prices.

MISHTANIM LEADING 100 TASE ISSUES

Table listing the top 100 TASE issues, including company names and their market values.

INTERNATIONAL SHARES

Table listing international shares, including company names and their market values.

NEW YORK

Table listing various New York market indices and their values.

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Table with columns: LAST CHANGE, LAST CHANGE. Lists various companies and their share price changes.

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TASE ROUNDUP

Shares up as Discount offering boosts interest

Mishtanim 255.36 ▲ 0.75% Maof 264.96 ▲ 0.75%

By DAN GERSTENFELD Shares closed higher yesterday in quiet trading amid profit-taking.

Key Representative Rates US Dollar... NIS 3.4030 +0.27%

NEW YORK MARKET INDEXES DJ Industrials... +19.88

NYSE STOCKS Unchanged Advances Declines

OTHER MARKET INDEXES FTSE 100... +1.19

DOLLAR CROSS-RATES (US) Pound spot... +0.0073

US COMMODITIES Cocoa (May) (ICE)... +0.18

LONDON COMMODITIES Cocoa (May) (ICE)... +0.18

SPOT MARKET METALS (US) Gold spot... +0.45

NEW YORK METAL FUTURES Gold (Apr)... +0.45

LONDON METAL FIXES Gold AM fix... +0.45

Foreign financial data courtesy of CommStock Trading Ltd.

World Market Roundup

Eurobourses slip as Dow drops

London (Reuters) - European stock markets made a jump...

Paris (Reuters) - European stock markets made a jump...

Frankfurt (Reuters) - European stock markets made a jump...

Stocks to close at 6,451.90, bolstered by strong first-quarter reports.

Technology shares lead stock rise

NEW YORK (AP) - Stocks tumbled higher Monday, led by technology shares...

Where to go

Jerusalem Hebrew University, Tours of the Mount Scopus campus...

Tel Aviv Tel Aviv Museum, Andres Serrano: The Mague, Soviet Photography...

Emergency Pharmacies Jerusalem: Clal Pharm, 22 Kanfani...

Emergency Pharmacies Tel Aviv: Clal Pharm, Beit Merkazim...

Emergency Pharmacies Haifa: Clal Pharm, Beit Merkazim...

Emergency Pharmacies Be'er Sheva: Clal Pharm, Beit Merkazim...

Emergency Pharmacies Ashdod: Clal Pharm, Beit Merkazim...

Emergency Pharmacies Netanya: Clal Pharm, Beit Merkazim...

Emergency Pharmacies Ramat Gan: Clal Pharm, Beit Merkazim...

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

Emergency Pharmacies Tel Aviv: Clal Pharm, Beit Merkazim...

Emergency Pharmacies Haifa: Clal Pharm, Beit Merkazim...

DUTY HOSPITALS

Jerusalem: Bikur Holim (Internal, obstetrics, ENT); Shaare Zedek...

Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Medical Center Dana Pediatric Hospital (pediatrics); Tel Aviv Medical Center (Internal, surgery)...

PAC MED INVESTMENTS

ALLIED AG 1120 -0.5 BAF 56.3 -1.4

ALLIED AG 1120 -0.5 BAF 56.3 -1.4

NEWS

in brief

Lieberman questioned again in Bar-On affair

Prime Minister's Office Director-General Avigdor Lieberman was questioned by the police team investigating the Bar-On Affair yesterday. Lieberman has already been questioned twice on allegations by Channel 1 that he was the intermediary between MK Aryeh Deri and Prime Minister Binyamion Netanyahu in appointing lawyer Roni Bar-On attorney-general.

Yesterday's session was supplementary questioning before police make recommendations to State Attorney Edna Arbel, expected later this week. Arbel is expected to reach conclusions within the next week regarding indictments. *Raine Marcus*

Allenby Bridge shooting was revenge attack

Sonia Ra'i, the Palestinian woman who shot and wounded three persons at the Allenby Bridge on Sunday, told investigators she did so to avenge her brother's death at the hands of the General Security Service.

Her brother, Ibrahim, an activist in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, died under interrogation at a GSS installation in Tulkarm several years ago, during the intifada. Relatives said she planned the attack long in advance, and travelled to Jordan to buy a pistol. *Jim*

Weizman visits Edri family

President Ezer Weizman yesterday paid a condolence call on the family of Staff-Sgt. Sharon Edri at their Moshav Zanoah home. Edri's parents told the president about the special relationship they had with their youngest child, who was kidnapped and murdered by terrorists seven months ago.

Many people, including Tourism Minister Moshe Katsav, made condolence visits yesterday and were received in a pavilion set up outside the house by members of Edri's Nahal unit. *Jim*

Details stall budget deficit decision

A second meeting in two days between Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, Finance Minister Dan Meridor and Bank of Israel governor Jacob Frenkel once again failed to reach agreement on how to wipe out Israel's increasing budget deficit.

Meridor and Frenkel both presented their arguments, but no concrete proposals were proposed. The two are scheduled to meet again today, before a final decision-making session with Netanyahu.

Meridor is understood to favor a NIS 1 billion cut in spending, matched by a one to two percent cut in interest rates, while Frenkel supports the cut, but maintains monetary policy must be used to curb inflation rather than to aid the fiscal side of the economy. *David Harris*

Ivry report on 'copter crash due tomorrow

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

The commission of inquiry into the February 4 collision between two transport helicopters that killed 73 servicemen is to present its final report to Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and Chief of General Staff Lt-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak tomorrow, ministry sources said.

Copies of the report are to be given to the bereaved families before it is released to the public. Some sections of the report may be

classified, and it is not clear if these sections will be shown to the families.

The report comes 70 days after Mordechai instructed David Ivry, a former OC air force, deputy chief of general staff, and long-time Defense Ministry director-general, to set up the inquiry. Ivry's commission was to have submitted its final report on March 20, but received an extension after attorneys for the five officers who may face disciplinary action demanded more time.

The inquiry presented an interim report two weeks after the crash, which noted that murky regulations may have played a role. Four officers who risk losing their positions are Brig-Gen. G, commander of the Tel Nof base where the CH-53 squadrons are based, Yasur squadron commander Lt-Col. E., his deputy, Maj. Y, and the operations officer for the Galilee Panhandle brigade Maj. A.

The Ivry commission is also likely to recommend changes in procedures in the helicopter squadrons and perhaps in all of the IAF.

Israel complains to cease-fire monitoring committee

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

Israel has filed a complaint with the committee monitoring the Grapes of Wrath cease-fire agreement over Hizbullah's Sunday detonation of a road-side bomb which killed a South Lebanese Army soldier and wounded another soldier and a civilian.

It is the 14th time that Israel has complained to the five-nation monitoring committee, since its initial meeting last August. It is not known if the Lebanese also filed a complaint with the monitoring committee over the IDF's artillery response.

The bombing broke a short lull in incidents in south Lebanon, where poor weather conditions have prevented Hizbullah guerrillas from operating. Bot senior officers in the Northern Command reportedly said they expect tension to escalate.

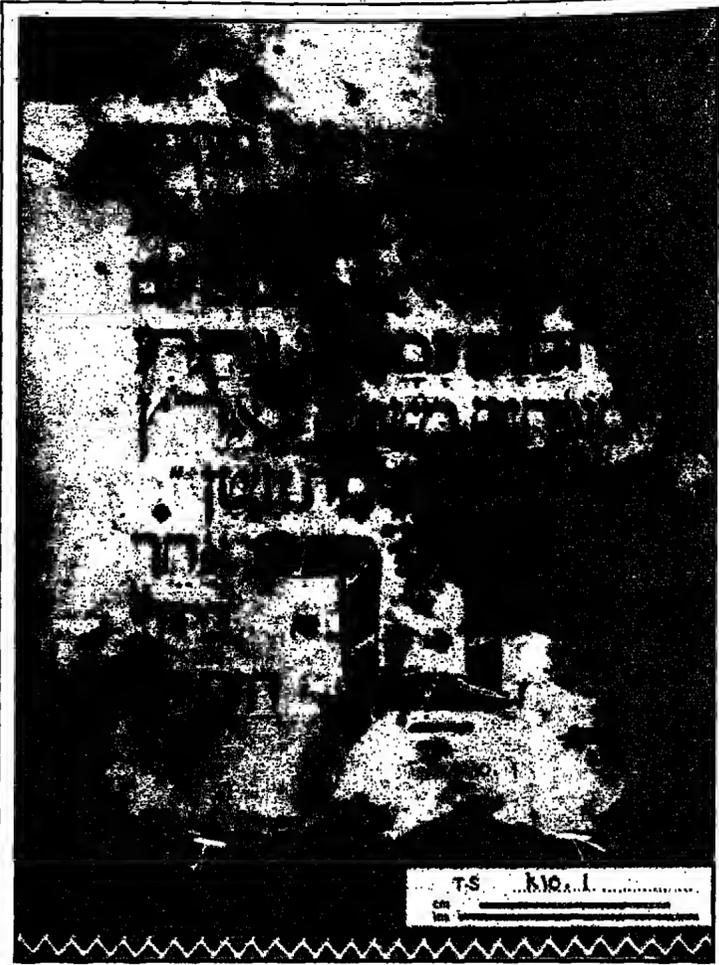
Sharansky opens Kiev fair



News agencies

Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky (center), on a three-day official visit to the Ukraine, cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony of the Israel Only '97 trade fair in Kiev yesterday, in the presence of Israeli ambassador to the Ukraine Tzvi Magen (left) and Ukrainian Trade Minister Sergiy Oskya.

In an earlier meeting with Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, Sharansky pledged to increase joint projects with Ukraine, suggesting a three-way relationship with the US. The situation of Jews still living in the Ukraine was also discussed.



700-year-old Haggada remnant

This remaining page of a 700-year-old Pessah Haggada, decorated with pictures of animals, apparently from the Catalonia region of Spain and found in the Cairo Geniza 100 years ago, will be put on public display at the Israel Museum for the first time June 1. The exhibit, including the page and about 50 other documents currently held at Cambridge University, England, includes some in the handwriting of the Rambam, Rabbi Yehuda Halevy, Rabbi Yosef Karo, and others.

(Photo courtesy of the Israel Museum)

PM to attend IDF Seder despite soldiers' gripes

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN and Jim

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu is not changing his plans to spend Seder night with troops at an IDF base in the Negev, despite reported complaints by some soldiers that they are being forced to stay on the

base instead of spending Pessah with their families.

Netanyahu's spokesman Shai Bazak said that the prime minister and his family - his wife and children and his wife's parents - are doing this to show their "identification with and appreciation for the work the soldiers do every day of the year."

He added that "if it becomes known that one extra soldier is being forced to remain on the base on Seder night because of his presence, the prime minister will cancel his going there."

He said that Netanyahu is not asking that any special arrangements be made for his visit.

Israel Radio reported, however, that even though the base in question is a large one, there is no doubt that preparations for Seder with the prime minister and his family are already under way, and that this entails extra work for the soldiers.

But following the report, the IDF Spokesman issued a statement saying that 00 soldiers were being held deliberately on the base in order to participate in

the Seder with the prime minister.

"Quite the contrary, the base commander decided to release a number of soldiers who were to have been on the base in order to make room for the prime minister," the statement said.

MK Dalia Itzik (Labor) said that if Netanyahu wants to attend a Seder with soldiers, it would be better if he invited soldiers without families here to his Seder, as the late Aliza Begin used to do quietly, without a media fanfare.

Better treatment has reduced heart attack deaths

By JUDY SIEGEL

A study comparing patients in the country's cardiac intensive care units (CICU) in the early 1980s and in the '90s proves that the use of drugs and aggressive treatment reduced mortality by 53 percent.

The study was conducted by the Israel Association for the Prevention of Heart Attacks at Sheba Hospital in Tel Hashomer and included all 25 CICUs around the country. The results will be presented at the annual conference of the Israel Cardiology Society, which opens

today in Jerusalem.

Data on 5,000 heart patients treated in the '80s and 3,000 in the '90s were compared. The more thrombolytic drugs to dissolve clots that were given in the early stages of the coronary infarction, the more likely the patient was to survive. Between 1981 and 1983, 19% of heart attack patients died within a month; today, the figure has dropped to 9%. Since the patients' characteristics (age and rate of smoking and diabetes) did not significantly change over the 15 years, improved treatment is credited.

WEATHER

Haifa	11-20
Tiberias	13-21
Afula	11-20
Samarra	10-15
Tel Aviv	11-21
Jerusalem	10-18
Beer Sheva	11-19
Dead Sea	15-24
Eilat	17-25

Forecast: Partly cloudy.

AROUND THE WORLD

	C	L	F	W	C	F
Amsterdam	04	29	12	54	cloudy	cloudy
Berlin	01	24	12	54	cloudy	cloudy
Buenos Aires	17	23	32	90	cloudy	cloudy
Caro	14	27	30	86	clear	clear
Chicago	-02	22	32	90	cloudy	cloudy
Copenhagen	03	28	37	99	clear	clear
Frankfurt	03	27	37	99	cloudy	cloudy
Geneva	03	27	37	99	cloudy	cloudy
Helsinki	03	27	37	99	cloudy	cloudy
Hong Kong	22	29	85	185	cloudy	cloudy
Jakarta	23	30	85	185	cloudy	cloudy
Jibon	14	27	37	99	clear	clear
London	03	27	37	99	cloudy	cloudy
Los Angeles	14	27	37	99	clear	clear
Madrid	09	29	44	111	clear	clear
Moscow	-03	27	37	99	cloudy	cloudy
Munich	03	27	37	99	cloudy	cloudy
New York	05	21	18	64	cloudy	cloudy
Paris	04	28	18	64	clear	clear
Rome	04	28	18	64	clear	clear
Stockholm	14	27	37	99	cloudy	cloudy
Sydney	14	27	37	99	clear	clear
Tokyo	13	27	37	99	clear	clear
Toronto	02	27	37	99	clear	clear
Venice	02	27	37	99	cloudy	cloudy
Zurich	02	27	37	99	cloudy	cloudy

Winning cards

In yesterday's Chance draw, the lucky cards were the 9 of spades, queen of hearts, 7 of diamonds, and king of clubs.

25,000 tickets issued in first week of Project 700

By RAINE MARCUS

Three people were killed in road accidents during this past week compared to the average 13, said Traffic Police chief Cmdr. Bertie Ohayon yesterday. On highways under the Project 700, there were no fatal accidents, he added.

"But since we only started Project 700 a week ago it is still too early to tell what an impact the project has had on the roads," Ohayon said.

The project started a week ago to reduce the number of road accidents. Police hope to cut down the number of accidents by around 10 percent by deploying increased forces and technology on 700 kilometers of highways.

During this past week, said Ohayon, police outposts have given out 25,000 tickets to traffic offenders. One thousand truck drivers received tickets for various offenses while 1,000 drivers talking on cellular phones without a speaker were fined. Some 500 vehicles were found to be not roadworthy.

SAVE WATER

MALTA

Continued from Page 1

seven Arab foreign ministers, and Arafat. The Barcelona conference first convened under the name Euro-Mediterranean Conference in November 1995, launching the joint process of 15 EU states and 12 Mediterranean partners - Israel, Egypt, Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Cyprus, Malta, and the PA.

It is the only regional forum which Syria and Lebanon have not boycotted, and to which they agreed to send their foreign ministers.

The conference work program, called the Barcelona process, focuses on increasing the political, economic, and social-cultural cooperation among the member states. The economic activity is aimed at setting up a Euro-Mediterranean free trade zone by the year 2010.

Palestinian Planning Minister Nabil Shaath and Industry Minister Maher Masri are expected to attend with Arafat and focus on economic and donor-related issues. Arafat is expected to press his diplomatic advantage with the European foreign ministers.

DRIVE CAREFULLY

CITY OF HOPE: Jerusalem from Biblical to Modern Times

This handsome history and pictorial album offers a multi-faceted account of Jerusalem, tracing the sequence of events, and featuring famous personalities, archeology, spiritual trends, and more.

Thirteen chapters cover Herod's Jerusalem, the late Roman, Christian and Muslim periods, and divided and united Jerusalem. Produced by Yad Ben-Zvi, the pre-eminent Israeli Institute researching the history of the land of Israel, this volume contains maps of the city in each period, and hundreds of color illustrations. Hard cover, large format, 323 pp.

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LONE WOLF

A Biography of Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky

by Shmuel Katz

This is the long-awaited English version of the biography of one of the most dramatic figures of 20th century Jewish history - Ze'ev Jabotinsky, founder of Revisionism - journalist, novelist, poet, soldier, linguist and outstanding orator. Shmuel Katz has drawn on archival material, unpublished and newly translated letters, and extensive sources for this account of the center of Zionist history in the 1920's and beyond. Katz himself is known as an author and newspaper columnist; he has used newly available archival documentation in this meticulous and comprehensive biography, from Odessa, 1880 to New York, 1940. Previously published in Hebrew as JABO. Hardcover, 2 vol., 1856pp.

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